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THEOLOGY OF PRAYER

AS VIEWED

IN THE RELIGION OF NATURE

AND

IN THE SYSTEM OF GRACE.

BY

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TO

The Members

OF THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND CONGREGATION
IN NEW ORLEANS,

WHO HAVE KINDLY LISTENED TO HIS VOICE THROUGH A
PERIOD OF SIX AND THIRTY YEARS, AND NOW
WITH WATCHFUL TENDERNESS WAIT
ON HIS DECLINING AGE,
THIS WRITTEN VOICE SPEAKS A PASTOR'S GRATITUDE.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THIS little volume does not profess to be an exhaustive discussion of a subject which has so many sides, as this of prayer. Our religious literature abounds in treatises which present its practical aspects. But so far as known to the author, there is no book which collects and refutes the various objections urged by different classes of sceptics. Nor is there to be found anywhere a full articulation of prayer in the system of grace. Scattered hints could be gathered here and there; but chiefly stowed away in theological works, not generally accessible to the ordinary reader, and not likely to be known except to the professional student. There seemed to be a gap here which ought to be filled, which is all that this Essay attempts.

If it has been well done, a good service will have been rendered to many pastors who, like the writer of these lines, have often wished for a compact and clear exposition of these points; which might be placed in [illegible] hands of many, besides the perversely sceptical, [illegible]re troubled with doubts which they are unable to [illegible]e. If this unpretending effort fails to accom[illegible]this end, it may fulfil the humbler mission of [illegible]ating some abler pen to achieve that in which it [illegible]iled.

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PART FIRST.

PRAYER IN NATURAL RELIGION.

THEOLOGY OF PRAYER.

CHAPTER I.

PRAYER: ITS NATURE.

A COMPLETE definition of prayer is obtained by combining the two answers of the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, thus: "Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God *for things agreeable to his will*, in the name of Christ, *by the help of his Spirit*, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies." The clauses italicized above are the only two which are not found in both; for it is a little singular that, whilst otherwise identical, there should be in each the omission of an element necessary to the completeness of the idea, which the other exactly supplies. The Shorter Catechism, for example, limits the objects of true prayer to things agreeable to the divine will; whilst the Larger Catechism brings distinctly into view the agency of the Holy Ghost in the inditing of our petitions. It may be true that what is omitted in each is nevertheless taught by necessary implication. We cannot, for instance, offer up our desires to God, except "for things agreeable to his will," without being guilty of a presumption which shall vitiate the worship; and we cannot intelligently pray "in the name of

st

Christ," without a reliance upon "the other Comforter," who "brings to our remembrance whatsoever he hath said." Nevertheless, a definition is formally incomplete which does not specify everything essential to that which is defined. The Westminster divines practically admit this by adding to the definition in one place what they omit in the other; which is, therefore, rendered perfect only when the two statements are united.

In this language prayer is represented as worship, in terms borrowed from the ancient Hebrew ritual. As the pious Jew of old approached God always through sacrifice, offering the firstlings of his flock upon the altar, so here the worshipper offers up "the calves of his lips" with adoration unto God. But all worship must be regulated by the divine will; hence these prayers can be accepted only when offered for things agreeable thereto. Again, this worship is presented to the Father through the mediation of the Son, who, as the High Priest, intercedes for us before the throne; which is to pray "in the name of Christ." Since "we know not what we should pray for as we ought, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities"; and this is to pray "by the help of his Spirit." Finally, as this is the worship of sinful and dependent creatures, prayer must include "the confession of our sins" and "the thankful acknowledgment of God's mercies." The exposition of these clauses, therefore, would carry us into the whole subject of prayer, and would leave no part unconsidered.

A different line of inquiry, however, is now proposed—to resolve the complex idea of prayer into its

original and most simple elements, which combined will embrace all that it contains. In the last analysis, then, what is prayer but *the language of creaturely dependence* upon that God from whom being itself is derived? We are accustomed to dilate fondly upon the dignity of man, in the grandeur of his intellectual powers, in the indefinite expansion of which these are capable, and in the wonderful achievements which they have wrought. We know not what may be the joy of angels amidst the disclosures of the upper world; but we do know the joy of interpreting the works of God, as science walks behind the Creator into the secret chambers of his power, and breathes into her song the earliest and softest whispers of his voice. What are these grand epics of scientific disclosure but an apocalypse of the Deity to man? in view of which we exclaim:

> "How voided his vast distance from the skies!
> How near he presses on the Seraph's wing!
> Is this extravagant? Of man we form
> Extravagant conceptions, to be just:
> Conception unconfined wants wings to reach him;
> Beyond its reach, the Godhead only more."

But when all this has been put together, and we have reached the utmost height of our ideal, we must come back to the mortifying truth, that man is still a creature locked up within limits which he cannot pass. Hunger and fatigue oppress the body. Even great Cæsar must cry—

> "Give me some drink, Titinius,
> As a sick girl."

The mind, too, in every path of knowledge, strikes against barriers that oppose further progress. In the

very answers which nature returns to our questioning lie deeper secrets to be explored. The spiritual within us which would know the Infinite, falls back in the faintness of exhaustion to the finite and conditioned; as the eagle, which would soar into the sun, must return to its eyrie on the mountain rock. So extreme is man's dependence, that the strongest often lie upon the bosom of the weakest; that by the refreshment of sympathy they may gather up their defeated energies to renew the battle of life. In this double view of the greatness and weakness of man, the apostrophe of the poet is fully justified:

> "How poor, how rich—how abject, how august—
> How complicate, how wonderful is man!
> Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
> An heir of glory! A frail child of dust!
> Helpless immortal! Insect infinite!
> A worm! A god! I tremble at myself,
> And in myself am lost."

This consciousness of dependence finds its only full expression in prayer; we lean upon God, and are at rest. It may pour itself forth with a pathos that stirs the heart of sympathy, or despair may muffle "the groanings which cannot be uttered"; in either case the intelligent recognition of creature-helplessness leaning upon divine power is the kneeling posture of the soul in prayer. It is the thirst of ignorance drinking deep draughts from the overflowing fulness of divine wisdo
It is the exhaustion of weakness drawing nerve int
broken will from the resources of infinite stren
This is prayer: when, sinking through the earthl
crust, the creature seeks repose in God; when fro
the eternal fountain he derives the help and sol

which the creature always needs, and which the Creator alone can supply.

Man's true nature is to be sought in that image of God in which he was first created. In his earthly part he is akin to the beasts that perish; but he is distinguished from these in that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Solomon draws the line between the two when he speaks of "the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth." Upon this soul is stamped the seal of the divine attributes. In his intelligence man dimly reflects the divine wisdom; in his affections, the divine benevolence; in his conscience, the divine rectitude; in his will, the divine power. Such a being can find his true sphere only in God. All these endowments point to that august source from which they are derived, as the only goal to which they can aspire; and the comprehensive act in which they all embark is the homage of an intelligent and eternal worship. To this end was man invested with "dominion over the works of God's hands," that, as the priest of nature, he might walk through the aisles of her vast cathedral, and lead the whole choir of earth in chants of thanksgiving and joy. It is his office to gather the inarticulate praises of this dumb world into his censer, investing them with his own intelligence and thought, and lighting them at the fire of his own devotion; and then, as the voice of nature, to pour the flood of praise forever upon him who has created all for his own glory.

As before intimated, man's mental and moral struc- [illegible] im to this majestic function. His reason,

which can hold discourse of God; his heart, which glows with the ardor of a seraph; and the easy connection between the two, by which thought glides into feeling, and feeling into frames of devotion, all fit him to be a worshipper in the temple of Jehovah. His memory and hope, which bind together the past and the future like two vast continents; his instinct of ambition and longing for immortality, which turn wearily away from sensual rewards to the prizes of eternity; the conscience, which sits upon its hidden throne, the arbiter of right; the depths of reverence and awe within him resounding with the echoes of the spiritual and divine: all these make him a worshipper, though it should be only in the silence and solitude of his own thought; whilst, again, his amazing constructive power in building up systems of truth, and his kingly relations to the world which has been placed under his dominion, designate him as the organ of that homage which is due to the Creator's supremacy.

But how shall man worship the infinite Jehovah without assuming the posture of prayer? Even the seraphim veil their faces as they unite in the triune chorus, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts." Shall not man draw the mantle over his head whilst with Abraham he exclaims, "Behold, now, I have taken upon me to speak with the Lord, which am but dust and ashes"? This prostration of the soul in humility before God is essentially prayer. It is an acknowledgment, in the very frame of the spirit, that the great and dreadful God stands in amazing contrast with the feebleness of the creature; who, therefore, abases himself before the majesty which when fro[illegible] and sol[illegible]

joy to approach. This, then, is a further step in the analysis of prayer; which is not only the expression of a creature's dependence upon God, but also the soul's intelligent homage rendered to his infinite perfections.

But if man has fallen from his original state of innocence, and is now under condemnation of law, then prayer takes on a new feature as the confession of sin, and becomes the *language of guilt*. However we may recoil from the acknowledgment, it is universal under the pressure of an accusing conscience. All the religions of earth, save Christianity alone, are religions of fear. There is scarcely a mountain-top upon which the blood of victims has not smoked upon altars dedicated to some avenging deity. The troubled confession breaks forth in a thousand forms in daily life. In sudden peril there is a mysterious unveiling of sins which, before that dismal hour, conscience had not seemed to note. At death, when eternity throws its shadow upon the soul, the spectres of the past rise as the witnesses of our guilt, and crowd with us across the bourne. Nay, long before this last experience, there are pauses in every man's life, when a great hush is thrown upon the soul, as the law smites with the edge of its sword. Under the crushing weight of his guilt, the penitent exclaims with the publican in the court of the temple, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" This, again, is prayer; not, as before, the simple recognition of dependence upon sovereign power, nor as the homage paid to infinite perfection; it has now gone into depths far gloomier than mere sense of insufficiency and weakness. It has become the wail of a soul burdened with its guilt, and casting

itself upon the mercy of God for pardon. This is prayer; not simply asking for blessings which shall fill the measure of its need, but bewailing the sin which is strangling the soul with its serpent coil, and seeking deliverance from its hideous embrace.

Here, then, is prayer under three aspects. It is the appeal of creaturely dependence; it is the wail of a sinner's guilt; it is the articulate worship of an intelligent soul. Under the first, God is regarded in his *natural* relation as the creator and preserver of all his creatures. Under the second, he is contemplated in his *gracious* relation as the Redeemer and Saviour of sinners. Under the third, he is adored in his consummate holiness and glory. The question arises, Does this analysis exhaust the meaning of prayer by yielding to us its logical content? If it does, it is commended by its simplicity. If it does not, it is condemned for its incompleteness. The following considerations may assist in the answer to this question:

1. *It provides a place for prayer under every form of religion, natural or revealed.* The distinction usually made between these two turns upon the source whence the knowledge of God is obtained: whether from the light of nature alone, or by direct communication from heaven; whether by the deduction of natural reason in the interpretation of God's works, or by the operation of faith in the testimony of the written word. It has been seriously questioned whether the simple fact of a revelation can thus be made the discriminating test; since the Creator did hold communication with the first man, both before and after the fall. The experiment has therefore never been tried how far this

light of nature alone might conduct us into the knowledge of God. Certain it is, however, that the Scriptures hold men responsible for their ignorance of divine things, even under the teaching of nature—"because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them; for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Perhaps a more exact distinction between the two systems is that drawn by an acute writer of our own time*—not as to the mode by which our knowledge of God is acquired, nor the degree to which that knowledge extends; but upon the condition or state in which the worshipper is found, and upon the method of his approach to the Supreme. It is just the distinction, under the view of this writer, between the religion of Law and the religion of Grace—the one based upon the covenant of works; the other, upon the covenant of redemption. The one was the religion of Adam before he plucked—

> "the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world, and all our woe":

the other was the religion of the same Adam when he was clothed with the skins of beasts and worshipped God by sacrifice. The one was the religion which Cain sought to perpetuate, when he brought the fruits of the earth, and worshipped God in his providence but not in his mercy. The other was the religion of Abel, who brought the firstlings of his flock, and had

* Thornwell's Collected Writings, Vol. I., pp. 31, 32, 268.

respect to the blood, "without the shedding of which there is no remission of sins." Natural religion is possible only to creatures who are holy and accepted through the law; whilst revealed religion is that of the sinner who relies upon the atonement of Jesus Christ, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." In both the divine will is expressly revealed, and the distinction must be sought in the nature of the two systems, and in the way by which we are to find acceptance with God.

Under both, however, according to the analysis already made, prayer is equally a necessity. If man is viewed as a sinner only in one, he is a creature in both. Whether sinful or holy, he is bound by the constitution of his being to render a supreme and constant worship. If prayer be the language of worship, it is obligatory under natural religion as under the religion of grace: the latter laying only an additional foundation for the duty in the pardon offered to human guilt. The complete idea of prayer is realized, if its use be demanded under every form of religion, whether the worshipper be fallen or unfallen.

This is not the last or highest induction. According to the view above taken, there is a sense in which prayer enters into the worship of "the spirits of just men made perfect," and of the spotless angels who are gathered into one body with them in Christ. The principalities and powers in heavenly places are still creatures, with natures grand indeed, but finite. Their holiness, like their life, is communicated, and can only be sustained by close fellowship with the Giver from whom it is derived. The fundamental idea underlying

creatureship is that of insufficiency and dependence, and the sense of this must abide in the consciousness of the highest and holiest being whom the Almighty has made. In the very blessedness which fills the measure of every want and anticipates its rise, there must be the knowledge that it is drawn from the divine fulness. Just in proportion to their holiness will be the quick discernment of this dependence upon him in whom they "live and move and have their being." But this sense of creatureship lies at the very root of prayer. The articulate expression of this in the utterance of our desires belongs to the outward form of prayer, through which it receives body and shape. But the inward essence is found in the feeling of dependence, out of which petition and thanksgiving must alike spring. Many a prayer does not form itself into speech at all. The real prayer lies back of the utterance in the thought, in the desire, in the constant and quiet attitude of the spirit towards God. The angels are thus swept within the compass of this large generalization. In the joyful consciousness of their dependence upon Jehovah, the whole posture and frame of their spirit is one continuous, concrete, and living prayer. It is not so much prayers, as prayer. The entire living consciousness is one all-comprehending act of dependence upon the Infinite, without intermission through their whole existence, and qualifying every service in which they engage.

As the language of worship, prayer equally employs the angels and the glorified spirits of men. For what worship can the most exalted creature offer which does not cast itself into the mould of prayer? God

can make no revelation of himself which does not fill the spirit with awe; and the sense of awe is the undertone of prayer which gives the key to all its accents. If the soul be filled with delight and break forth into praise, let it be remembered that this is but a mode of prayer. In the narrow conception which confines the latter to petition and supplication, praise may appear to be its contrast. It is in reality only its complement, by which it is rounded into a perfect act of worship. The joy which is naturally expressed in praise is only the soul's refreshment in contemplating the divine glory. It is the creature's response to the holiness and blessedness of God from his own satisfaction in what is congenial. Praise, then, so often considered the antithesis of prayer, involves the same dependence upon the divine fulness which prompts the petition. It is essentially of the nature of prayer, however it may strike a different note from that of penitential confession, or of pleading supplication. The exposition seems exhaustive, then, which construes prayer as the necessity and privilege of intelligent creatures in all worlds, and fundamental to the worship rendered, alike in heaven and upon earth.

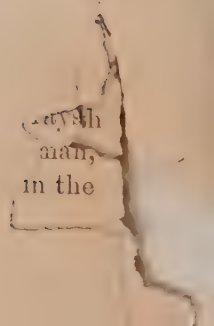
2. *This analysis yields all the parts of prayer in their natural and logical development.* Prayer, as the language of worship, divides easily into *adoration* and *praise;* as the language of dependence, it breaks into *petition* and *thanksgiving;* as the language of guilt, it gives both *confession* and *supplication.* There remains only *intercession*, the seventh of these prismatic rays, and this springs from all these conjoined, since man, clothed with many relations, must worship God in the

furniture of all his affections and ties. These different parts of prayer express its whole idea; and they emerge so readily from this threefold distribution that it may be regarded as logically complete.

3. *The preceding view establishes also the imperative and universal obligation of prayer.* All are God's creatures, and must, therefore, acknowledge his supremacy, or forfeit his favor. All were made originally in his image, and cannot, therefore, withhold their homage without apostasy from that nature which is their glory. A prayerless being cannot achieve desertion of God without the loss of all that forms the crown of his own excellence. It is an apostasy from ourselves, not less than from God. If sin has broken man's connection with his Maker, the pressure of a common guilt, and the hope of a common pardon, bind with a superadded obligation all who are involved in the same condemnation. If the angels be included in this duty, there can be no escape for those beneath them in the scale of dignity, and who are here under discipline for the life to come. This thought is pressed no further now. It is mentioned here only to sustain the general exposition of the nature of prayer.

4. *Finally, it is evident that prayer can be addressed only to a personal God* standing in immediate relation with the subjects whom he rules. It is no apostrophe to bald and lawless force, nor to blind and impersonal fate. Neither has it any significance if the God to whom it appeals is locked up behind the bars of nature, with no power to control the movement of the God-ty machinery. Prayer is a protest against every ess of Pantheism, which wars against the essential

personality of the Deity. It is equally a remonstrance against the Naturalism which renders that personality useless by sundering the ties which bind him to the creatures he has made. It is an infinite personal God alone, to whom finite and dependent beings can approach as to a Father providing for his own. It is only to him who is the God of all grace the guilty can come, pleading for the forgiveness of sin. It is only he who is "glorious in holiness" that can receive the homage of a true worship. Each element of prayer leads directly to a personal God, as the sole object to whom it can be addressed; and each element, in its turn, binds the duty upon the conscience with all the authority of constitutional law.



CHAPTER II.

PARTS OF PRAYER.

THE seven-fold division of prayer into adoration, praise, confession, supplication, petition, thanksgiving and intercession, is yielded by our analysis—just as the white light resolves into the colors of the spectrum. Like these colors also, they shade into each other so as not to be sharply defined. Indeed, upon this interblending depends, in both cases, the unity which is the product of all. This consideration will disarm the complaint that may arise, if a hard logic should fail, as unquestionably it must, to draw distinctly the line of separation between them. Adhering to a previous classification, they will be presented in the couplets in which they naturally pair off.

Adoration and Praise.

The distinction between these is singularly faint. The shading of thought is so delicate, that the difference is not impressive until we strike the outermost rim of both. Adoration may be defined the homage rendered to God in the immediate view of his majesty, blessedness and glory, filling the soul with corresponding emotions of veneration and awe. Subjectively viewed, it is the entire prostration of the spirit before God, under its conception of the grandeur and holiness of the divine nature itself. Objectively consid-

ered, it is the outpouring of these conceptions and emotions in the language of direct worship to him in whom these consummate perfections reside. Praise, on the other hand, springs from the reflected consciousness of the delight felt in this divine contemplation; and fastens rather upon the outward manifestations of the Deity in his works, upon which it dwells with sparkling and enthusiastic encomiums. The mind is not absorbed as before in the dazzling glory of Jehovah, but catches the varied image from the broken surface of his works. The fundamental distinction is this: In adoration we view God in himself, as revealed to us in the glorious proportions of his own nature and being; in praise we view him in the operation of his will, displayed piece by piece in what he does. In the former the conceptions are grand, solemn and subduing; in the latter the emotions are buoyant, lively and joyous. In the one, the feeling is but half revealed to consciousness—the soul being rapt in its own contemplation and worship, somewhat after the manner of the old prophetic ecstasy. In the other, there is a reflex action of the mind, in which it awakes to the recognition of its own pleasure, and breathes its admiration in the language of joy and song. In adoration, the soul reveals its passion in the prayer of Moses: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." In praise, we are put in the cleft of the rock and "see the back parts" of that glory, in the precious glimpses caught from the fragments of his works.

Adoration, in the Scriptures, finds expression very largely in the titles by which Jehovah is addressed. Some of the ancient fathers were accustomed to say

that he is the only being who has no need of a name. They meant that, as names are employed to distinguish betwixt the individuals of a class, God being singular and alone was independent of this necessity. But a name is required for the disclosure of himself to his intelligent creatures; and still more, if they are to approach him in communion and worship. Some form of address is necessary when they bow before him in prayer; and the spirit of reverence will prompt to the use of such only as comport with his majesty and holiness. In the recorded prayers of the Bible, it is remarkable to what extent the invocation is an index to the subject of the petition. This is by no means accidental. When the heart is burdened with desire for any good, the mind instinctively casts about to discover in the character or relations of God that which will justify the request. This, as being foremost in thought and that by which the worshipper is assured, is thrown forward to break the way into the prayer. It will thus be embodied in the title by which the Divine Being is invoked, and becomes a condensation of the appeal which follows. When Paul would pray for the peace of the church at Thessalonica, he addresses himself thus: "Now the Lord of all peace himself give you peace always by all means" (2 Thes. iii. 16). When he would pray on behalf of the church at Rome for the grace of hope, the invocation and petition perfectly co-incide: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xv. 13).

A long list of descriptive titles may easily be culled

from the Scriptures, denoting severally some perfection of the divine nature, or some covenant relation of God with his people, which either draw out the devotional sentiment or constitute the warrant upon which the plea is based. The following list is presented, not as being exhaustive, but sufficiently full to illustrate what has been said: "The Lord God," "the Lord our God," "the Lord God Almighty," "the great and dreadful God," "the great and mighty God," "the Lord strong and mighty," "the Lord of Hosts," "the King of glory," "the Father of glory," "the Most High," "the Lord of lords," "the King of kings," "the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," "thou that dwellest between the cherubim," "the Maker of heaven and earth," "the Lord our shield," "the Lord our strength," "the Lord our righteousness," "the God of hope," "the God of consolation," "the God of peace," "the God of our salvation," "the Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," "the God of Israel," "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," "the only wise God," "the blessed and only Potentate," "the King eternal, immortal and invisible," "our Father which art in heaven."

The reader catches a little of the passionate devotion which these impressive titles embalm; and when he remembers how they have been breathed by thousands of the redeemed who are now in glory, his emotion will find utterance in the words of Ezekiel (Ezek. iii. 12, 13): "Then the spirit of the Lord took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, blessed be the glory of the Lord from this place: I heard also the noise of the wings of the living crea-

tures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing." Or, he will be caught up into the ecstasy of John, the Ezekiel of the New Testament, and hear "the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. xix. 6).

But the spirit of adoration will scarcely be content with these significant titles. The feeling will pour itself out with a broader flood through the vent which these may open. A few passages of Scripture may be cited here as examples of adoring worship, with a reference to many more in a footnote at the bottom of the next page. "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Ex. xv. 11). "Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee and praise thy glorious name" (1 Chron. xxix. 10–13). "Bless the Lord, O my soul, O Lord my God, thou art very great: thou art clothed with honor and majesty, who coverest thyself with light as with a garment" (Ps. civ. 1, 2). "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be power and glory forever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim. i. 17). "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwell-

ing in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Tim. vi. 15, 16). "To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty and dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen" (Jude, 25).*

These few quotations perhaps load the testimony beyond the reader's willingness to bear. Yet who would close his ear against these organ notes in which heaven and earth pour out their worship in the temple, and before the throne of God? They seem, at least, to show the extent to which prayer takes this special form of adoration. Oh! the selfishness of the thought which restricts prayer to mere petition! Shall nothing drive us to God but the pressure of want? Shall we think of him only when we are hungry, and forget him when we are full? Must the sense of guilt be always required to sting us into the presence which we seek only to obtain the relief of pardon? Is there nothing attractive in the character of Jehovah himself to draw us with the power of a magnet? Surely it is a dull heart which does not warm to the beauty which he discloses, and whose impulse is not to utter its joy in these ascriptions of adoration and praise. What can be a worthier use of the faculties of thought and feel-

*See also Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7; Deut. x. 17; 1 Sam. ii. 2; 2 Sam. vii. 22; 1 Chron. xvi. 10, 25 29; Neh. ix. 32; Job xxxvi. 26; Ps. xxii. 3, 27, 28; Ps. xxiv. 7-10; Ps. xxix. 1 4; Ps. lxxii. 18 19; Ps. lxxxix. 8 10; Ps. xciii. 1, 4; Ps. xcvi. and xcvii.; Ps. xcix. 1-3; Ps. civ. 1, 2; Ps. cxl.; Ps. cxlv.; Isa. vi. 3; Jer. x. 7; Jer. xxxii. 17 19; Dan. ix. 4; Hab. i. 12, 13; Rom. xi. 32, 33; Rom. xvi. 27; Eph. iii. 21; Rev. iv. 8, 11; Rev. v. 12, 13; Rev. xv. 3, 4; Rev. xix. 1, 4.

ing than to employ them in the worship of the august Creator? Or what nobler employment of the tongue, the glory of our frame, than to articulate his praise in the loftiest language which sanctified genius can inspire? Jehovah may always be adored, for he is unchangeably worthy of the homage. This, therefore, is a part of prayer independent of the shifting frames by which we are so often painfully embarrassed. Whatever our condition—whether filled with peace in believing, or mourning in darkness of soul—whether tender in penitence, or dull in the apprehension of sin—whether aching with ungratified desire, or overflowing with gratitude for blessings bestowed—God is always before us in the fulness of his glory to challenge our worship.

This high occupation re-acts favorably upon Christian experience, in lifting the spirit out of frequent depression. It is astonishing how much of this depression is due simply to violation of the known laws of our nature. For instance, who does not know that the tides of feeling have their flow and ebb, like those of the sea? Yet we dream of having these abide with us as constantly as our principles or our convictions. Emotion has too sharp an edge for this; and our Creator provides rest for the spirit in this law of re-action, as he provides repose for the body in sleep. In both cases there is the wholesome cessation of activity, which would too soon wear us out with its friction. Again, what fact is more ascertained than that the emotions arise only in the presence of the objects which call them forth, and that no mandate can summon them from their lurking-places? Yet we

foolishly expect the demonstration of our logic to control affections which respond only to the charms which they behold. With a deep philosophy, on the other hand, the Bible always enjoins the exercise of faith as the condition of peace, hope or joy; simply because faith is the telescopic eye which beholds what is revealed to it, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The soul must come out of itself, and look upon Christ, who is the author of salvation; and peace flows in through the trust which ventures all upon him. Hence the profit derived from adoration. The morbid tendency to gloat over what is dark within, is checked. The eye is turned outward to gaze upon the beauty which entrances. The affections are awakened in the presence of holiness and goodness. The sickly sensibilities are toned up, and a healthy religious action takes the place of the despondency which was weakening all the powers of the soul. It points to a defect in our religious experience, that we do not oftener "extol and honor the King of Heaven" in our prayers.

Adoration, however, from its nature, cannot be continuous. The effort is too exhausting, and the emotions excited are too overwhelming to be long sustained in this mortal state. The mind seeks relief in the more detailed exhibitions of divine power, as seen in his single works. This is the discriminating feature of praise, so far as the two may be logically separated; and we see how the inner edges of both insensibly blend. Adoration is more or less complete in the conception of the whole. When limited in its range, it tones down into praise; which, on the other hand, may

rise until it swells into adoration. Its natural pitch, however, is upon a lower key, both as springing from a narrower view of the divine excellency, and as involving a measure of self-contemplation, enabling the spirit to recognize its own delight. The conception may be less grand, but it is the more comprehensible from its very limitation, and affords leisure for the analysis of the feeling aroused. Praise, therefore, as coming more within the grasp of our faculties and less fatiguing in its exercise, is more frequent in our experience, and better understood as to its character. It is not necessary, then, to adduce the body of testimony which was required in treating of adoration. Indeed, the Scriptures are so full of praise that we cannot turn to a page which does not record some of its diversified expressions. A few passages only will be cited as examples of a large class, and as showing how uniformly it turns upon some special view of the divine glory reflected from his acts. There is the song of Deborah in the fifth chapter of Judges: "Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel. Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I will sing unto the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel." Also, the song of David when he was delivered out of the hand of Saul: "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock, in him will I trust. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my high tower and my refuge, my Saviour; thou savest me from violence. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies!" (2 Sam. xxii. 2–4.) Again: "Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord,

for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever. Who can tell the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth all his praise?" (Ps. cvi. 1, 2.)*

Whoever will read the solemn chants to be found in the Psalms of David alone, will be impressed with the extent to which praise is lavished upon the works, both of providence and grace. The above citations will suffice to show wherein it is distinguished from adoration. In either form the highest worship is rendered of which the creature is capable. As characteristic of the service which will obtain forever in the temple above, it commends itself to the saints on earth. They who most abound in it will enjoy the most light in their own souls, and will be most in harmony with those who sing "the new song" in the presence of the throne.

Petition and Thanksgiving.

These are strictly correlative, springing alike from the creature's dependence upon God. In petition, we seek for blessings that are needed; in thanksgiving, we are grateful for mercies which are bestowed. In religion, as in science, we are compelled to assume the self-existence and self-sufficiency of the Deity as an ultimate fact. It is the germinal truth out of which arises the whole system which is expounded in either. Hence the Scriptures, in their first utterance, proceed to record the divine acts without pausing to affirm the divine existence at all; and philosophy postulates the same as fundamental to its sphere of investigation.

*For other examples of praise, see 1 Chron. xvi. 8, 9; Neh. ix. 5, 7; Ps. ix. 1; Ps. xxx. 1; Ps. cxlvii. 7, 8; Ps. cxlviii. 1–5.

Everything outside of God was created by his power, and by his power is preserved. Only beings endowed with intelligence, however, are able to recognize this dependence; which becomes in them an act of spiritual homage to him in whom "they live, and move, and have their being." The beasts of the field, under the pressure of their wants, turn instinctively to the sources of supply furnished by the Creator; but there is no recognition of the wisdom and goodness by which their necessities are relieved. It is reserved for man, in the moral nature which qualifies him for so high a function, to render this worship for himself and for the lower creation over which he presides as the head.

Petition, of course, implies a sense of need awakened in the soul. The want must not only exist, but must be felt. This distinction is by no means superfluous. The waste of the body must be constantly repaired by food and rest; but we are reminded of it only when hunger and thirst and weariness, as faithful sentinels, sound the alarm. Equally so with our spiritual necessities. What can the sinner need more than pardon and holiness? Yet he is insensible to both until the Holy Spirit "convinces him of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." It is, therefore, a law of the divine administration to supply no want which is not first felt, and so felt as to drive the creature to seek relief. Without such provision the connection would not be preserved between the creature and the Creator, and the former would perish in its helplessness. The first condition of prayer, then, is the sense of need, out of which shall spring the desire that embodies itself in petition.

But petition can be addressed only to a Being who has the power to grant and to withhold. In addition, then, to the feeling of want, which may otherwise be a mere instinct, as with the brute, there must be recognized a source of supply. It is this which distinguishes prayer from an outcry of distress. It is the expression of intelligent hope, as well as of impassioned desire. Over against the insufficiency of the creature stands the fulness of the Creator. They are the two poles of the same conception, and reciprocally imply each other. Prayer establishes the circuit between the two, and puts them in actual connection. Man feels the urgency of his need, and turns to his Maker from whose fulness it may be met; as it is written, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19). Only one point remains to be considered: Has he any warrant for approaching the Divine Majesty with the voice of his request? If there be anything in the personal relations of the Creator, or in the attributes of his character, or in the revelation of his will, to justify the expectation of a hearing, then all the conditions of prayer are fulfilled. There is the sense of need, of which desire is begotten; there is the source discovered, from which the supply may be drawn; and there is the warrant upon which the plea is based, and the hope of its successful issue.

Some important questions arise just here and challenge attention. It may be asked whether every vagrant wish of man's vain heart may be carried to God in prayer; and if not, where is the limit to be placed beyond which it is not lawful to pass? In other words,

how far does the warrant extend which justifies the expectation of a favorable answer; and where must the creature cast himself in utter abasement before the divine sovereignty? So in relation to the methods by which it may please Jehovah to answer the prayers addressed to his throne. Shall it be by an immediate conveyance of the blessing which is sought; or shall this depend upon certain conditions announced beforehand, and come through intervening agencies and secondary causes? It would be premature to answer these questions before we strike the principles upon which they are severally determined. They are raised now simply to indicate what is involved in petition, as seeking a supply for the creature's need, with a just expectation that it will not be denied. For the present, it will suffice to ground this expectation upon the dependence of the creature itself, and upon the fact that creation would seem to be purposeless if it did not logically include preservation. As this dependence is entire, covering the whole tract of creaturely existence and everything by which that existence may be sustained, it is easy to see how large a space petition must occupy in prayer. It must be regarded as one of its principal parts, without which prayer would not be prayer at all.

Thanksgiving, it has been already intimated, answers to petition as its counterpart, the complement by which the two are rounded into one. If the feeling of want leads the creature to God for relief, this relief will in turn bind the soul over to gratitude for the favor conferred. They belong together, and each is incomplete without the other. The acknowledgment

of dependence is the same in both, and both find the same measure in the intensity of feeling aroused by the evil which is deplored and relieved. The same principles, therefore, cover both, which do not call for fuller exposition now, when the effort is simply to determine in what prayer consists, and what are its necessary parts.

CHAPTER III.

PARTS OF PRAYER.—Continued.

Confession and Supplication.

WORSHIP, we have seen, breaks into adoration and praise, whilst creaturely dependence is acknowledged in petition and thanksgiving. But if man be a sinner, then must his prayer be the language of guilt, as expressed in the members of this couplet. Every right has been forfeited by transgression, and he cannot approach the Deity except in sackcloth and in shame. "Unclean! unclean! God be merciful to me a sinner!" Such must be the language bursting from his lips, as he lies in the dust before his Judge.

The first duty of man unquestionably was obedience to the law under which he was placed: for "the law was holy, and the commandment holy and just and good." It stated nothing which the Ruler had not the right to claim, and nothing to which the conscience of the subject did not fully respond. The motives to obedience were inconceivably weighty, both in the fearfulness of the penalty and in the glory of the reward. The probation was easy, and the responsibility was sharply defined. Under these conditions, man should have remained steadfast and loyal to the end. But if in the abuse of his freedom he chose to disobey, then the duty of repentance and confession becomes as supreme and imperative as the original obedience itself.

The one is exactly proportioned to the other; just so far as the obedience was obligatory, is the transgressor bound to acknowledge the guilt of disobedience. Confession then becomes a necessary part of the prayer with which the sinner approaches a pure and holy God. As a creature, he must render the homage which is due to his Sovereign and Lord; yet, as a sinner, he cannot approach the divine majesty until the sin is cleared away by which he is separated from that august presence.

In three languages, Greek, Latin,* and English, the term employed for confession is literally "speaking together." Could it be more forcibly put? The two parties, God and ourselves, unite in a concurrent declaration in regard to sin. God, construing sin in the light of his holiness, declares it the abominable thing which his soul hateth. The sinner, under the conviction of conscience, feels the terribleness of it in his own experience; and running upon this line, unites with God in declaring it that abominable thing which every soul ought to hate. Man comes to look at sin from God's point of view, and pronounces upon it just as God pronounces. Through this convergence of testimony, sin is pointed at as with the finger, according to the Hebrew idiom † for confession; and its nature is brought to light, according to the ground-form of the Latin word ‡ for the same idea. We are prepared then to consider what confession of sin really imports.

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* ὁμολογέω (ομος α λεγω)—*Confiteor* (*con* and *fateor*).

† יָדָה from יָד the hand—to point with the hand.

‡ *Fateor*, from Φαω, to shine.

1. It begins with a *clear perception of the nature of sin*, as seen from the inside as well as from the outside. Sin cannot be fully confessed merely in its consequences. These are dreadful enough, but not so dreadful as the thing itself. God looks at sin in its intrinsic vileness. We make a true confession only when the eye has been opened to take the same view; not, of course, as broad or as deep as that of Jehovah, nor marked with the same terrible abhorrence; but a view nevertheless which is true, because it discovers the real deformity of sin as opposed to all that is beautiful and holy and excellent in the character of God.

2. With this conviction of the essential evil of sin, *the heart will be aroused to a proper indignation against it.* Let us not be afraid of the terms necessary to express a righteous abhorrence of sin, lest we evaporate their strength until nothing is left but a little pious sentiment. There is such a feeling in a good man's breast as a cultivated resentment, which shall pervade his whole being and arouse every faculty. There is in the soul of the true penitent a virtuous and burning hatred of that which robs God of his honor, and himself of peace. Conscience should be educated to look, not only with pity, but with horror and detestation upon what is known to be wrong. And the more robust and sinewy the character, the more will these generous resentments flame forth against sin in all its forms.

3. Following this holy anger against sin, *confession involves a judicial pronouncement against it before the tribunal of conscience.* God declares against it "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." His justice utters

the decree which it deserves; and now the sinner, arraigned before the bar of his own conscience, which is the shadow of the tribunal upon which Jehovah sits, pronounces the same condemnation. He not only perceives the fact of transgression, but feels the wrongness of it; and concurs in the justice of the penalty which the law thunders against it.

4. All this, however, would be vain *if confession did not include true repentance and abandonment of the sin which is bewailed.* The habit of sin may not easily be broken, and the penitent may find himself again ensnared in the net which he is seeking to rend. Nevertheless, it is the sincere purpose and desire at the time to escape the bondage of sin, or else the confession itself is the thinnest deceit ever attempted upon himself or upon the omniscient God. In true confession all the powers of the soul are engaged. The judgment recognizes the standard of duty, and notes the deviations from it. The conscience feels these deviations to be wrong, and fills the soul with shame. The heart kindles with a holy abhorrence of what is impure within ourselves. And the will turns from its commission "with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience." Thus is the sinner purged from guilt, when his confession has been heard by him who is able to forgive.

From this exposition it is easy to see why supplication is coupled with confession. He who is filled with disgust at the hideousness of sin, and who is fixed in his purpose to break from its control, will not rest in the impotence of simply bewailing his calamity. He will implore the divine mercy for the pardon of his guilt,

and the divine power for deliverance from its bondage. This is supplication, which may not differ from petition, except in the intensity of its meaning—as request may deepen into entreaty. The etymology of the word indicates at once the humility and vehemence of the prayer; being derived from the kneeling posture of the suppliant, when he pours forth his entreaties at the feet of his master. The prayer of the sinner must therefore carry, along with the confession, the continued imploring of God to interpose his executive clemency and saving power in delivering the sufferer from the curse which he has incurred.

A few testimonies from the Scriptures will show the emphasis which is put upon supplication as a necessary part of prayer. In Eph. vi. 18, we read thus—"praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." In Phil. iv. 6, the apostle exhorts to "be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Paul writing to Timothy (1 Tim. v. 5,) describes her who is a widow indeed as "trusting in God, and continuing in supplication and prayers night and day." The same suggestive association of supplication with sorrow and vehement desire is found in Luke's description of Anna in the temple, "who served God with fastings and prayers night and day." Still more impressively, our blessed Redeemer is presented in Heb. v. 7, as "offering up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him who was able to save him from death."

Supplication can never be suspended whilst the consciousness of sin remains. If the Antinomian ob-

jects that the justified believer can no longer confess the guilt from which he has been graciously discharged, this is simply to trifle with words. The Christian may no longer be guilty in the sense of being liable to punishment, while he most keenly feels that he deserves the condemnation from which he is released. To confess one's blameworthiness tends not to diminish, but to increase, the grateful appreciation of the mercy which pardons it all. In repentance and confession, moreover, the believer continues to repudiate the sins which God has graciously remitted, and from which he desires to be forever separated. The Scriptures are full of confessions, where pardon had already been sealed upon the conscience, as when David in old age prays "remember not the sins of my youth." (Psa. xxv. 7.) Indeed, sin is seen only the more heinous in the light of that love which blots it out forever; and the more God forgives, the less is the Christian able to forgive himself. In his confessions renewed to the end, he is heard exclaiming:

"Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die,
My heart has so decreed;
Nor will I spare the guilty things
That made my Saviour bleed.

Whilst with a melting, broken heart,
My murdered Lord I view,
I'll raise revenge against my sins,
And slay the murderers too."

Intercession.

Prayer for others is earnestly enjoined in the Scriptures, as may be seen from the passages referred to

below.* Many striking examples are also afforded in the Old Testament and in the New. Take only the few instances of the intercession of Abraham for Sodom (Gen. xviii. 23–32); the entreaty of Judah for Benjamin (Gen. xliv. 18–34); the prayer of Moses for Israel at Mount Horeb (Ex. xxxii. 11 14; Deut. ix. 18, 26–29); the official supplication of the High Priest within the veil (Lev. xvi. 15, 16); and the recorded prayer of our Lord for his people in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of John.

Intercession founds upon the social nature of man, by which no one liveth or dieth to himself. We are born in a nest of relationships, which we continue to multiply through life in every friendship we form, in every association and tie we knit. We cannot withdraw from communion with the race without violence to all the instincts of our being. We stand at last in this grim solitude a melancholy ruin, the bleak walls crumbling only the faster beneath the lichen and moss with which they are covered. God has therefore ordained that we shall appear in his presence in the furniture of all our affections, and clothed with all the sympathies of which the net-work of life is woven. In no part of prayer do we so grandly approach the priestly office as when breaking through the crust of selfishness, and forgetting our own wants and sins, we can take up the cares and woes of others—putting our souls in their souls' stead, that with priestly fervor we may lay them on the heart of God. This deserves to

*Rom. xv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 11; Ephes. i. 16 and vi. 18; Phil. i. 19; Col. iv. 3; 1 Thess. iii. 1; 2 Thess. iii. 1; Heb. xiii. 18.

be more particularly considered in the specifications that follow:

1. Intercession, then, is *involved in the obedience we owe to the second table of the law*, which our Lord resolves into the general principle of love. For how can love be shown more disinterested and large, than when we take our fellow-beings upon our hearts and bear them to the throne of grace? And when this love to man is but the offshoot of a higher love to God, it burns as fragrant incense upon the altar of divine worship itself. A double blessing rests upon our obedience when, in these intercessory prayers, we can say to him upon the mercy-seat, "Our goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all thy delight."

2. Intercession further *springs out of the trusteeships with which we are severally invested on earth.* Not only are we grouped in circles widening out to the circumference of the globe, but we are constituted the guardians of each other in them all. Cain cannot successfully deny that he is his brother's keeper, whilst the voice of that brother's blood is crying from the ground. A current of influence passes at every social contact, for which every social unit is responsible. Upon this broad fact the Apostle builds the law of Christian charity: "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." (1 Cor. viii. 13.) Of course, the sacredness of the trust increases with the nearness of the relationship. Hence Paul urges the responsibility in terms like these: "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy

husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife." (1 Cor. vii. 16.) How can these immense trusts be safely discharged, unless they be taken up at the foot of God's throne, and be borne back in fervent prayer for the blessings we can only seek and have no power to bestow? "I exhort, therefore," writes Paul to Timothy, "that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.)

3. *Intercession is in part the communion of saints.* "Joined in one Spirit to one head, we are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another;" and "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." (Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 26). In view of this the Christian poet sings,

> "Before our Father's throne
> We pour our ardent prayers;
> Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
> Our comforts and our cares."

But where shall these common sympathies be mingled, except as all gather under a common weakness at the throne which is common to them all. The New Testament word, employed with almost technical precision for intercession, has for its primary meaning "to fall in with," or "to meet with";* and the trysting place where the saints love to blend their prayers is beneath the shadow of the throne on which the God of pardons sits.

* Rom. viii. 26, 34; 1 Tim. ii. 1; Heb. vii. 25.

We see, then, the root from which this part of prayer develops itself—the possession of a common nature, either sinful or redeemed, with its reciprocal relations and obligations, in all of which we must appear in God's presence to worship. It follows, of course, that this duty cannot be rightly discharged without a reasonable persuasion of our own interest in Christ; nor unless we identify ourselves with those whose cause we espouse, so as to plead it like our own; nor without a clear recognition of the ground on which the intercession is based. These cautions go far to illustrate the nature of intercession, as restricted to beings who are still under trial, and not beyond the probation upon which they are placed; as being regulated by the divine will revealed to us in the Scriptures; as excluding all notion of personal merit as the foundation of our prayers; and as grounding all hope upon the merit of Jesus Christ, through whom alone sinners may undertake to plead for sinners here on earth. In this priest-like sympathy with others there is a happy forgetfulness of ourselves; correcting the selfishness which is so apt to eat into the heart of our piety, like the rust which devours the solid iron with its slow but remorseless appetite. David affords a brilliant example of this unselfish piety, when he cannot close the most penitential of all his psalms, in which he pours out before God all his guilt and shame, without adding the prayer, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem: then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar." (Ps. li. 18, 19.)

CHAPTER IV.

PRAYER A UNIVERSAL DUTY.

THIS topic has been slightly anticipated, in considering the nature and parts of prayer. The grounds of this obligation require to be more fully stated, because of their own importance, and because they lead right up to the objections which are by some rashly urged against the duty.

1. Before and beyond all reasons, we have *the express command of Jehovah himself.* This is given in declarations such as these: "When thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret"; "After this manner therefore pray ye." (Matt. vi. 6, 9.) "Ask, and it shall be given you." (Matt. vii. 7.) "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke xviii. 1.) "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." (Matt. xxvi. 41.) "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." (Eph. vi. 18.) "In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. iv. 6.) "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." (1 Tim. ii. 8.) It would not strengthen the argument to cite other testimonies, which the reader's memory will

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easily supply, enjoining this duty in terms equally explicit and imperative. This body of evidence would be swollen out of all proportion if the indirect testimony of Scripture be adduced, in which the duty is inferred rather than enjoined; as in the countless promises made to the prayer of faith, the declarations of God's covenant faithfulness to his people, the recorded prayers of the pious in the Old Testament and in the New, with the divine approval and the wonderful answers vouchsafed often to the same. In addition to all this, we have minute directions as to the manner in which prayer is to be made, the spirit and temper with which it should be accompanied, the obstructions which must be surmounted, and the pleas under which it shall surely prevail. In short, when we have collated all that the Scriptures say upon this one duty, we have transcribed a large portion of its statements respecting practical and personal religion. The case then stands thus: on every page of the Bible, and in every form of utterance, the obligation is laid upon "men that they pray everywhere."

It does not unsettle this authority a particle, should we fail to unfold the philosophy of prayer, and to determine the place it should occupy in the scheme of providence or of grace. The obligation will not be cancelled, even though we should not be able to penetrate the secret of its efficiency: whether in itself a cause producing the results we recognize, as the natural effects of its own power; or whether it be simply the condition upon which the Supreme Ruler suspends the benefits which he confers. Before these

questions are even proposed for consideration, this duty rests sufficiently upon the plain command of God. Whatever difficulties surround the doctrine of prayer, we have the right to remand them all to him whose authority binds the duty upon the conscience. It is for him to decide whether prayer be compatible with the eternal counsel of his own will, and with those material and intellectual laws by which he controls the universe. All these fall within his sphere, as he from the beginning framed the policy of his own administration. The simple fact that he has ordained prayer as the privilege and duty of all his intelligent subjects, announces beforehand the reconciliation of these difficulties, and takes them out of the field of discussion, so far as they constitute the ground of the creature's obligation to pray.

It would indeed be very satisfactory to understand all this; and thus to vindicate at the bar of human reason a duty which would then rest upon necessary principles perfectly comprehended by ourselves. These principles do unquestionably exist, and they are partly susceptible of exposition, as the basis upon which rests the whole structure of natural religion. It is only affirmed here that in the creature's relation to the Deity, the question is simply one of supreme authority; and that whether we can or cannot expound these principles, or solve the problems which lie on the boundary line between the Divine and human agencies, and at which they so sweetly, yet mysteriously blend. To those who defer to the authority of Holy Scripture, no other foundation of any duty is required than a "thus saith the Lord." Those who do not recognize

the dogmatic authority of the inspired word must be met with other arguments, which we proceed to indicate.

2. This duty is *laid upon man under each of the three aspects of prayer* which have been already presented. For example, man is dependent upon God for everything he possesses. Life, health, reason, all were in the first instance bestowed, and are at every moment preserved and continued to us. Our wants are constantly recurring, and in whatever way, or by whatever agency they may be supplied, it must all be traced up to one original source. "Do not err, my beloved brethren," says the Apostle James, "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." The proper recognition of this dependence is itself the posture of prayer. Hence we have ventured to represent the angels and "the spirits of just men made perfect" as engaged in the essential duty, though not in the formal act of prayer. With beings in a state of perfect blessedness, the outward petition is suppressed by the instant supply of every want as it arises. So long, however, as man is held under conditions of discipline and trial, his recognition of dependence must express itself in the language of petition and thanksgiving. To live in dependence upon a superior power, which is never humbly and gratefully acknowledged, is simply to attempt a fraud, the more remarkable as it is a fraud attempted alike upon the omniscience of the Deity and upon the consciousness of the creature himself. It turns the whole life of such a being into a falsehood and a cheat.

Again, man endowed with moral attributes, is placed under a perfect and holy law, given to him both as a rule of conduct and as the standard of character. This law he has broken, and he is now justly held under its penalty. He is, therefore, as much bound to repent as he was in the first instance bound to obey. The one obligation is co-extensive with the other. He ought not to have sinned; but having sinned, he ought to be sorry for it and to bewail it before God. But this brings us right up to the duty of prayer, as the confession of guilt. As "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and as "there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not," this duty of confession is obligatory upon every soul that bows to the acknowledgment of guilt. Let this statement be repeated with all emphasis. If there was no ground upon which to hope for pardon, still the sinner is under a supreme obligation to confess his fault. Pardoned or unpardoned, he is equally bound by the law of his being to acknowledge and to abandon sin. If through the corruption of his nature he is under the bondage of sin to renew it every day, this does not exempt him from the original obligation of obedience, which remains forever uncancelled. He should never have sinned at all; he should stop sinning at once; the one obligation is the precise measure of the other. Even under the supposition that prayer does not open the prospect of relief, the duty of confession, repentance, and abandonment of sin remains undiminished. How much more, if overtures of pardon and reconciliation are made to the sinner, is he bound to supplicate the divine mercy

and be restored to the divine favor? Under every view, confession and supplication, as parts of prayer, are made the duty of every soul of man upon the earth.

Still further: Prayer is not only universally binding as the language of the creature and the sinner, but also as that of the worshipper. Stamped with the divine image as being made "a living soul," man's high prerogative is to catch upon the mirror of his own nature the glory of the Creator, and to reflect it back upon him in intelligent and holy worship. His headship over nature is to this end: that, in the interpretation of her secrets, he may disclose the "eternal power and Godhead" hidden in them from the creation of the world; and, as the organ of her hitherto silent praise, may pour it forth in psalms of joy before his throne. Man is ordained a priest to render vocal the worship of all the creatures; which is first made instinct with the life and heart his intelligence and love shall supply. It is a high and solemn function, binding on all who possess the powers of thought and feeling which distinguish men from the brutes. If sin has blinded the understanding, blunted the affections, defiled the conscience, and enslaved the will of the sinner, so much the worse for him; for there can be no release from the responsibility which belongs to him as man to render "incense to God and a pure offering." If in his perverseness he shall bring "the torn and the lame and the sick" for sacrifice, it will surely not be accepted; but neither shall he be discharged from the obligation to "offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving" unto the Lord. The duty of worship is universal;

and worship, filled with the awe which the divine majesty inspires, must always put on the humility and lowliness which prayer implies.

3. It follows logically from these principles that *prayer is an instinct of man's religious nature;* always operative, except when it is repressed and overcome by the sinfulness which will brook no restraint, and seeks to escape from all connection with the Most High. Instinct has been defined that which "prompts to the performance of actions without deliberation, and without necessary knowledge of the relation between the means employed and the ends attained." It is set in contrast with reason in man, as "the power determining the will of brutes." This distinction is scarcely true, if understood to mean that the gift of reason wholly excludes the power of instinct. Unquestionably reason, as the nobler endowment, renders man less dependent upon instinct, and lifts him into a higher sphere of its own. And as the reason is developed, the power of instinct waxes less and seems to be almost superseded. It is difficult to conceive of the nature of any creature which is not furnished with the instincts necessary for its preservation; and man, with all his intellectual endowments, sometimes finds the slower processes of reason anticipated by the quicker activity of instinct. One falling from a lofty spire grasps at the empty air, with every muscle strained to its utmost tension; and one thrown overboard at sea will clutch the floating straw as though it were a solid spar. In either case the act proceeds from the instinct of self-preservation without the intervention of reason, which would instantly expose the futility of the en-

deavor. The distinction between the two is sufficiently drawn in the philosophic verse of Pope:

> "Reason, however able, cool at best,
> Cares not for service, or but serves when prest,
> Stays till we call, and then not often near;
> But honest instinct comes a volunteer,
> Sure never to o'ershoot, but just to hit,—
> While still too wide or short is human wit;
> Sure by quick nature happiness to gain,
> Which heavier reason labors at in vain.
> This, too, serves always, reason never long;
> One must go right, the other may go wrong."

If the possession of reason, then, does not exclude the operation of instinct in man, we should expect his religious nature to be defined and protected by tendencies which were designed to guide with the unerring certainty of moral instincts. Amongst these the disposition to pray must be reckoned one of the most conspicuous. A soul cast in the image and after the likeness of God, may be expected to assert its spiritual nature by striving to commune with its divine author. Nothing but sin drags these aspirations into the dust, and extinguishes the prayer in which they seek to rise.

We have chanced to light upon some illustrations of this moral instinct in a quarter where the reader would not be likely to look for speculations of this kind. We refer to Bulwer's *Strange Story*, in that portion of it where one of the interlocutors accumulates the arguments in favor of the existence of soul in man. With this general acknowledgment, we will appropriate what is pertinent to the matter in hand without formal quotation of the language. He points,

for example, to the little child lisping the morning or evening prayer at its mother's knee, and asks how it is that before that infant mind can be taught a single rule in arithmetic or grammar, or even to combine the letters of the alphabet into the words it shall employ, it grapples with the mystery which is a scandal to the philosopher;* and in the solemnity which overawes its young heart, bows before the majesty of the divine presence and worships the Father in heaven? Opposite to this picture, he sketches the form of an aged sire breaking his staff as he sits upon the edge of life, and committing his soul to God in holy trust as he is about to face the dread uncertainties of the eternal and unchanging future. What but the religious instinct in both could thus touch with responsive faith the mysteries which are so unsearchable by human reason? Not content with these natural illustrations, this philosophic writer proceeds to instances in which the instinct of prayer asserts its supremacy in defiance of the unbelief and skepticism by which it is often oppressed. There is the familiar case of Lord Herbert,† of Cherbury, who, after writing against the truth and certainty of any particular revelation, and asserting the sufficiency of nature's light in religion, could inconsistently throw open his casement and pray to God for a sign through the blue sky whether to publish or to suppress the book. A similar contradiction is cited in the great Cæsar, who could deny the immortality of the soul in the Roman senate, but could not ascend his chariot without muttering a

* *A Strange Story*, Chapter XLVI.

† See the full account in Leland's *Deistical Writers*.

charm, nor lead his army across the Rubicon without consulting the omens. *

In the same line of evidence are the vows and prayers of men extorted in their hours of peril; the deep instinct leaping out of concealment in the presence of danger, and overmastering the philosophy which would smother the petition for divine help. It has been well noted, too, in this connection, that the impulse to pray in the foresight of peril is peculiar to man, and is not shared with the beasts of the field. The brute has unquestionably a far quicker perception of danger than man—reads sooner and with a truer interpretation the signs and portents of nature. He pricks up his ear to the first sound of the distant thunder, catches the first gleam of the lightning's polished blade, feels first the sullen calm which forebodes the storm, detects first the tremulous wave-like movement of the solid earth when, as if with some secret heartache, her parting crust is about to open and swallow everything in the abyss. But with all this ready apprehension of danger, the brute never gathers up its instincts in the form of prayer. He betakes himself blindly to some supposed place of safety, or flees in terror wildly in any direction from the fatal spot, or in dumb despair sinks beneath the doom which he cannot avoid. But man, with the higher instinct of his higher nature, turns in his prayer to the God who is able to save. † In the full recognition

* *A Strange Story*, Chapter LXXI.

† *A Strange Story*, Chapter XLVI.: "Nature does not impel the leviathan or the lion, the eagle or the moth to pray. She impels only man. Why? Because man only has a soul, and soul seeks to commune with the everlasting, as a fountain struggles up to its source."

of his helplessness, he casts himself upon the bosom of him "in whom he lives and moves and has his being."

If these suggestions are of any force in proving prayer to be an instinct of our religious nature, then the application is very direct to establish its universal obligation. With that steadiness which characterizes all instincts, this should act uniformly in drawing all men toward God as their portion. If it does not, the disturbing influence is sin, which cripples and counteracts this original tendency; and for this disturbing influence, as well as for the aberration and perversion it occasions, we are consciously responsible at the bar of our Judge.

4. Prayer is a universal duty, as *the moral discipline through which the faculties of the soul are brought to their fullest development, and to the fullest enjoyment of which they are capable.* Dr. Chalmers deduces an argument for the immortality of the soul from the great law of nature, that "for every desire or every faculty, whether in man or in the inferior animals, there is a counterpart object in external nature."* In the case of brutes, this adaptation is exact; "with whom," to cite his own expressive phrase, "there is a certain squareness of adjustment between each desire and its own gratification." "The one is evenly met by the other," so that there is no overlapping on either side. Under the guidance of corporeal instinct, the animal puts forth its effort for a certain enjoyment; and this enjoyment comes exactly up to that desire, neither falling below nor reaching beyond it. Man,

* *Bridgewater Treatise*, Part I., Chapter X., sections 16, 17.

on the contrary, has yearnings which this earth can never satisfy, and which point directly to God and the great hereafter as the objects of his search.

This deserves to be a little further considered. Here is a bridge spanning a broad river with a single arch. One end rests upon its abutment this side the stream, the other upon its abutment at the further bank; and the very law of gravity which threatened the structure with ruin serves only to steady it and to hold it firmly in its double socket. Does this emblem teach how man, with his aspirations for the Infinite and Eternal, shall bridge the chasm which lies between? It must be with a single span resting upon its abutments on either side of the gulf, in the nature of man and of his Maker alike. For example, there is intelligence in man, and over against it there is the fulness of truth in God; the former finds its complete satisfaction only in the latter. God has, indeed, expressed his thoughts in his works; but the human mind never rests with contentment in any of these finite forms of truth. It presses up the stream to find truth at its source, as it is in God himself. Knowledge gained affords repose only until the mind shall recruit its strength in coming thus far, which becomes then the point of departure for discoveries yet to be made. The mind is continually bounding along the curve of the finite, whose tangent is perpetually soliciting to embark in the search of the infinite. How, then, shall man complete his intellectual culture, except by personal communion with the Supreme Mind, the source from which all truth is derived? The bridge rests its arch upon human intelligence this side of the chasm, and upon the

fulness of divine truth at the other side; and prayer moves upon that highway, carrying up man's longing after truth, and receiving communications from God which shall become his knowledge.

Take another department of our complex nature, the affections. With what a wealth of love is man endowed? How easily the heart diffuses itself over all the circles of human relationship—filling each one without diminution of its abundance, and then lapping over with a full remainder into the immensity beyond! These earthly connections and associations form but the school where we are trained in the divine art of loving. The educated affections, exhaustless because ever expanding, refuse to be absorbed by objects wholly finite, and break over all limitations to find the infinite in goodness. How shall these reach their fullest expansion and enjoyment, until, rising upon cherubic wing, they terminate upon him who is styled in Scripture "the blessed God"?

So with *the imagination and the taste.* Man goes forth in search of the beautiful; feeds upon its finite expression with a momentary delight; strives to reproduce—perhaps to embellish—it in his own creations of sculpture, painting, poetry, and fiction; then turns wearily aside to ask, Where is the archetypal glory, of which these are but the faint and fleeting shadows? Is it not clear that man must pass over the bridge whose arch rests upon the finite and the infinite alike? And as he stands transfigured before the presence of the throne, find the perfection of his nature in beholding the glory of his Lord?

And what shall we say of the will, the root of man's

activity, in which thought and emotion both crystallize and are embodied? Only this: that faith, drawing up the future until we are abreast of it, and so delivering us from the discontent of the present, is the spring of all heroic deeds. And faith, with truthful finger, points ever to the eternal and unseen; it leads up to God, in whose service and praise man finds his highest activity engaged, and that forever.

It is needless to enlarge. All human endowments of intelligence, conscience, affections, and will, are so many points in man's nature to which all that is divine may attach itself, and so draw him into fellowship with the august Being in whose image he was first fashioned. Prayer, as the medium of this intercourse, becomes the necessary discipline through which he is perfected for an immortal destiny.

5. Prayer is obligatory upon all, *that human agency may blend intelligently with the divine*, in working out the scheme of providence and grace. Undeniably these two factors enter into the production of every event. Our philosophy may be unable to detect precisely where or how they blend; but the same philosophy will teach us to accept both upon their separate evidence. Man, if he be a responsible being at all, must move upon his own plane, working, contriving, predestining (if you will) up to the bent of his knowledge and power. God, too, if he be acknowledged in the supremacy of his being, must move upon his plane, infinite in wisdom and power, "working all things after the counsel of his will." Where these plans and purposes intersect, or how they fold one upon the other, we may not be able to distinguish.

All that we do know is, that the intersection of these threads makes the web of history. We may not be able to measure the angle at which these planes touch each other, nor to see how the one can move across the other without contradiction or even friction. We only know that in the loom the shuttle must move between and across the threads, and that warp and woof cannot run in parallel lines. It is the crossing at right angles, with a good pressure of the threads against each other, that gives the firm texture of the web.

The only choice, then, given to man is as to the mode and spirit of his concurrence: whether to burrow in the dark like a mole, without an intelligent purpose or sincere desire to bear his part in the great scheme of providence; or whether to blend his affections and volitions in sweet harmony with him who, from the beginning, threw upon the screen of his own thought the design of the universe and the draft of its history. If man is to be a willing co-worker with God in the execution of his plans, then must he pray. He cannot rise to an equal share of the divine sovereignty, so as to sit down at the council board of the Godhead; he can only pray to be a single thread in the mighty tapestry which has been woven in the divine loom from all eternity.

These specifications will suffice. The explicit command of Jehovah; the nature of prayer as the language of dependence, of guilt, and of worship; the force of the instinct which impels to its exercise; the office of prayer in the discipline and perfection of character; its necessity as the point of junction be-

tween the divine and human agencies; together with the fact, only here alluded to, that it is the appointed channel through which God's favor flows to man; all these make the duty of prayer absolutely imperative upon every member of the human race.

CHAPTER V.

OBJECTIONS TO PRAYER.

First, an Impeachment of the Divine Perfections.

IF the duty of prayer has been sufficiently established in the preceding chapter, it may be deemed superfluous to consider the objections which have been urged against it. The obligation rests on its own affirmative evidence, undisturbed by any difficulties which may surround it—like the mist which may obscure, but cannot extinguish, the light of the sun. Truth is not to be weighed in a pair of scales balancing duty against difficulty, as though the one can be cancelled by the other; for no positive duty can be dislodged, until the evidence on which it rests shall be itself swept away. Indeed, the subject may so far transcend the limits of our finite comprehension as to involve the difficulties in question; which thus lose their destructive force, and become a collateral proof of what they were adduced to oppose.

It is perhaps to be regretted that in our popular treatises on prayer, the skeptical objections have not been more thoroughly discussed. Confidently as we may repose upon the testimony of divine revelation, against which the opposing waves dash themselves into spray, it is at least charitable to sympathize with the difficulties under which others may labor. When the infidel throws out the bold challenge, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" fidelity to the

truth requires that it should not pass without a reply. Possibly the skeptic may be reclaimed from his error, if not, he should at least be warned of the impiety into which he has plunged. Again, the young need protection from theories dangerous from their plausibility, and captivating because of the emancipation which they promise from divine control—a control displeasing to "the carnal mind," which is "enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither can be." Further than this, pious minds are often embarrassed in their devotions by doubts craftily insinuated of the possibility of any real approach into their Father's presence. Although no place be given to the wretched sophisms with which their ears are filled, yet the remembrance of them will recur at seasons of devotion, and hinder their enjoyment of this delightful privilege. Will it not prove a balm to such, if these pestilent suggestions could be forever dissipated into thin and viewless air? In addition to all this, truth gains by being canvassed—especially on the side from which it is attacked. Like the torch, "the more it's shook, the more it shines;" and we will come to a more full understanding of the entire subject, by an articulate consideration of the objections which have been urged against prayer.

These objections may be classified in the following order:

The *first* is drawn from the acknowledged perfections of Jehovah, in view of which prayer is but solemn impertinence.

The *second* is drawn from the fixed laws of nature, which allow no place for the interposition of prayer.

The *third* founds upon the seeming failure of our prayers, in the very instances in which a favorable answer might be expected; showing both the expectation and the prayer to be without a warrant.

The *fourth* assumes that, as acceptable prayer presupposes a gracious state of mind, it is with the impenitent and wicked simply a farce—to be suppressed rather than encouraged.

The *fifth* urges that the intimate communion with heaven implied in prayer, opens the door to the dreamiest mysticism or to the wildest fanaticism.

It is difficult to think of any objection to prayer, which is not referable to one or other of these five categories; and the filling up of this outline commits to a breadth of discussion, which can only be redeemed from weariness by the intrinsic and immense importance of the topics involved. They will be presented in as many as five distinct chapters.

The first objection may be expanded thus: As God is infinitely wise and good, he cannot but devise what is best for all his creatures—and being unchangeable, his plans are of course immutable; any suggestions, therefore, of men in prayer, are simply an impertinence, if not more seriously construed into an impeachment of the divine attributes. One might tremble under so fierce an indictment, if he were not re-assured by its obvious recklessness; it claims too much to be true. The objector ought to be startled into caution by the boldness of the conclusion into which he is rushed by his logic. Let it, however, be examined with calmness and candor.

1. The objection does not lie; *the divine judgment*

in the premises being exactly the reverse. The objector says man must not pray, because in so doing he suggests something to a wisdom, which, being infinite, cannot err; or else, seeks to prompt a goodness which, being boundless, needs no solicitation from the creature; or else, to modify that which, being perfect, is necessarily unchangeable. What can all this mean, he asks, but an unwarrantable intrusion into God's purposes, and constructively an impeachment of his perfections? But can there be such incompatibility between the two as alleged above, if prayer is not only allowed of God but is graciously accorded and explicitly enjoined? It would be the repetition of testimonies already cited to quote at large the scriptural authority for prayer. Let these few references suffice: "I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere." (1 Tim. ii. 8.) "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thess. v. 17.) "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." (Eph. vi. 18.) And finally the direction of him that came from the bosom of the Father that he might declare him, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matt. vii. 7.)

We meet the objection, then, on the square. If prayer really impinges upon the perfections of God, how shall he lay it on the conscience as a duty, and upon the heart as a gracious privilege? How can the infinitely wise God enjoin that which contradicts his wisdom, or the unchangeable Jehovah ordain that which imputes to him the weakness of mutability? It specially concerns the Divine Being to protect his own attributes. Let it be remembered that absolute per-

fection is presupposed in the very existence of Deity. He ceases to be God, even to the conception of the creature, the instant he ceases to be perfect. How much more is this perfection necessary to himself in the preservation of his own being? Were it possible that he should let go one of his attributes, he would be annihilated to our thought, and the very concept be destroyed. Should the creature's breath be suffered to tarnish one of his perfections, this would bring the Deity to a self-contradiction fatal to his being. He must be matchless in all his attributes, or he must cease to be. It is the glory of the divine nature that it can subsist only in the harmony and purity of all its properties. It is under this obligation, the most urgent and solemn which can be imagined, the *obligation to be*, that "the only wise God," by his Son and through his Spirit, commands on every page of Scripture the duty of prayer. If this antagonizes all the qualities of the divine nature, what can be more exquisitely absurd than to charge upon the Deity such a suicidal intent?

If it be urged that this simply restates, but does not resolve the difficulty, the sufficient answer (at this stage of the discussion) is to remand the adjustment to the Deity himself. Under the pressure of his own wants, the creature deals only with the duties commanded, and with the privileges which are granted. If these should appear to conflict with the necessary attributes of the Creator, the difficulty proceeds from our ignorance rather than our knowledge. The divine wisdom is equal to the solution of the problem, and were we in possession of the requisite knowledge, the

discrepancy would melt away like the mist, and complete harmony would be disclosed between these seeming contradictories. The simple command to pray, issuing from the Being who is most concerned in giving it, yields beforehand the assurance of its entire consistency with his own integrity. Thus the objection is overruled by the authority under which the duty is imposed. The validity of this conclusion will not be admitted, of course, by those who refuse to acknowledge the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures. Every argument drawn from this source will be met either with a stout denial of the authority of the book itself, or with the determination to weigh it in the scales of a critical judgment. It will be necessary, then, to descend to the plane of natural reason, on which the objector takes his stand.

2. What now, if *the necessity of prayer shall be found imbedded in man's moral constitution*, compelling to its exercise? This view of prayer as a natural instinct was perhaps sufficiently presented in urging its universal obligation. It comes to the front again in rebuttal of the objection before us, affording the opportunity for other and fresh forms of illustration. It fell to the writer's lot to act, for a number of years, as one of a Board of Regents in an insane asylum. With no little astonishment, he discovered at least three-fourths of the unhappy inmates unhinged upon the subject of religion. He approached the intelligent and experienced superintendent with the question—"Is there anything in religion to unsettle man's reason; if not, how come these crazy people to harp incessantly on religious themes?" His reply is quoted, as happily

illustrating the matter now in hand: "No, sir; man, notwithstanding his obstinate rejection of the divine authority, is by the innermost law of his nature a religious being. When reason is upon the throne, his doubts and fears, his anxieties and misgivings are under control, and his religious exercises are no further disclosed than it pleases him to reveal. But when reason is unshipped, and the wrecked intellect drifts at the mercy of the waves, the great secret leaks out because the power of concealment is gone; discovery is made that throughout his whole career the man's religious nature has always secretly asserted itself. So far from religion having a tendency to unsettle human reason, its agency is employed in every well-regulated asylum, in soothing those paroxysms of distress and fear with which these poor unfortunates are so often agitated." This response of an experienced and skilful officer the writer had frequent opportunities of seeing verified; as the wildest of the insane were again and again soothed by the promises of Christian hope, in listening to the accents of Christian prayer, or as they were melted by the sounds of Christian praise. With practical demonstrations of the power of prayer before his eyes, who can doubt that in the lowest deep of the human soul God has implanted this ineradicable instinct of creaturely weakness appealing for help to the divine strength?

It is not left to the wreck of reason to bear this compulsory testimony to this startling truth. There are moments in which the soundest and strongest intellect bows to the force of this inextinguishable conviction; moments of peril and of pain, when the

weakness of man pours its pitiful moan into the ear of God; moments of sorrow and bitter grief, when the mask is torn from the face of the earthly life and eternal solemnities break upon the soul. The world may mock at these utterances as extorted by distress and fear, or may pity them with a measure of mingled contempt. But this is the hinge of the argument; it is in the weakness of a created and finite nature that man seeks after his Maker, and hence this office of prayer as the way of approach into his presence. It is when the crust of vanity and pride which congeals over us is broken through, that the hidden instinct of a religious nature leaps forth to find its satisfaction in the divine. Whenever this is subjected to ridicule and taunt by the shallow and profane, let it pass as the sheer cant of the worldly and the worthless.

How deeply this appeal in prayer to Jehovah is implanted in the human soul, may be shown from the oaths by which his name is continually profaned. It may seem a strange inference; let the reader judge of its relevancy. It is human nature that reverently prays; it is perverted human nature that still appeals to the Supreme with oaths and curses. Somehow even the wicked cannot help praying, after their sort: a sardonic irony with which nature avenges itself, by holding them to the recognition of that God from whom they seek to escape. How universal the vicious habit is! Wherever one goes the ear is smitten with these direful oaths, in which the blessed name which all should revere is tossed from lip to lip with lightness, if not with scorn. Most significantly, too, men swear the most dreadfully when most aroused and

thoroughly in earnest, in moments of anger and of deep passion. Nor should it be overlooked that the oaths which are the most common are those which invoke the dreadful God in the exercise of his inflexible justice, and appeal the most directly to the retributions of the judgment day and the pains of eternal perdition. To a thoughtful mind all this is oppressively significant and solemn. By what overruling constraint are men held to the acknowledgment of God, just when they are most forgetful of him? Why should the wicked, in their moments of wickedness, bear the most emphatic testimony to the penalty that awaits them? How comes it to pass that bad men should make more frequent and fervent appeals to the Almighty than good men are able to do with all their devotion? It will not do to deny that these imprecations are prayers; to affirm that they are mere expletives, only designed to fill a blank in one's speech. It is not true that they are used without a purpose or a meaning. On the contrary, they are employed to confirm one's veracity in a given statement, or to assure one's fidelity in a given task, or to vent one's spleen in a moment of anger. In every case it is a direct appeal to the divine omniscience, or to the divine justice, to interpose in the matter, or in the manner of the invocation. Were it a mere expletive, any chance word would fill the chasm; why should the Divine Being be always invoked, and that, not only in the use of his awful name, but in the challenge of his office as the ruler and judge of men? All this is done, not occasionally and by few, but the wide world over, in all languages and dialects spoken on

earth, in all ages of time, the oath is used seriously, or in jest, in all classes and conditions of society. This universal propensity to use the name of God in daily speech, has a meaning which we should seek to fathom. Unquestionably, what is universal in human practice must have its ground in human nature itself. What can this be but the conviction of God's being and presence, and of his moral government over men, which even the wicked cannot shake off because laid at the very root of their nature? No man can therefore object to the propriety of prayer, who ever swore an oath, or ever heard it sworn by another. A logical interdict will be served upon him, which shall rule the objection out of court. If the profane swearer can thus pray fifty times within an hour, there is no reason why the pious Daniel may not open the windows of his chamber, and pray to the God of heaven three times in a day. If, then, prayer is thus bound up in the very constitution of man, breaking forth under these different manifestations, the objector finds the same difficulty in nature of which he complained in revelation; and the only safe conclusion, in the one case as in the other, is that the conflict is only apparent, not real—due simply to the limited range of our faculties. In the expansion of our knowledge, these conflicting rays would blend in the most beautiful light which can fill the eye—the present discord would merge into the most perfect harmony that can charm the ear.

3. A third and kindred answer to this objection is, that *it leads to the absurdity of cancelling all religion.* Surely if God be infinitely wise and good, if he be

infinite in power and immutable in counsel, then is he worthy of the creature's highest homage. It is incumbent upon men and angels to render the worship and reverence due to such consummate excellence. But what do homage and reverence imply? Is it simply to place the Deity in the focus of our thought, and view him only in what Bacon terms "the dry light of the understanding"? Or is it to lean upon the Almighty in the fulness of his glory, as the source from which the very joy of our own being is derived? We do not worship God with the intellect as separate from the conscience, or with the heart as separate from the will; but in the complement of all our powers, we recognize and serve Jehovah in the dependency and homage of our whole being. It is man in his ignorance drawing upon the fulness of divine wisdom for instruction—in his weakness, drawing upon divine strength for support—in his vacillation and perplexity, drawing upon the divine purpose for stability. But what is this except to define prayer anew in the terms already familiar to the reader? The form of petition may not be employed, but the underlying posture of the spirit in this restful acquiescence in all the divine perfections, is the fundamental idea of prayer. If, then, the objector's logic sweeps this away, it sweeps with the same desolating flood the whole of practical religion. A nature endowed with such traits as those we claim for man, yet walled up within itself and with no outlet for all the gratitude and praise with which it is filled, is a confessed lie, and dies of its own exhaustion. It gives endowments with no corresponding object on which to terminate; an understanding with

no access to the truth on which it shall feed; a heart with no supreme goodness upon which its affections may fasten; a conscience with no infallible standard to which its decisions may be referred; a will which is only a lawless force flapping loosely about with no commands it shall obey. Shut man out from approach to God in prayer, and his whole religious nature becomes a delusion and a sham. It is placed in an exhausted receiver, and is extinguished in its own fatal seclusion. The argument is none the less effective from being negative in its form. An objection which leads to a confessed absurdity receives its death-blow from the very logic which conducts it to such a conclusion. It is only a minute philosophy intoxicated with the fumes of its own speculations, and independent of the trammels of logic, that will undertake to wall-in the Deity behind the solid masonry of his own attributes, so that he shall not overflow upon his creatures; or that will draw a dismal moat around the world, so that no communion shall exist between thought and God, between the soul and its Creator, between time and eternity.

4. The answer which finally paralyzes the objection is, that *it proceeds on a total misconception of the office of prayer*. It assumes that the petitioner offers his suggestions as an independent party entering into conference with the Deity upon equal terms, with the view of directing his wisdom or of modifying his counsels. No wonder that such an intrusion upon the divine prerogative should be denounced as both presumptuous and wicked. Nothing could be further from the truth. In prayer the creature simply expresses his sense of emp-

tiness and want to be supplied from God's infinite fulness; he confesses his trangressions that they may be forgiven in the sovereignty of divine mercy; he pours forth his gratitude and praise in acknowledgment of God's free bounty. In each case alike, the prayer does not contravene a single attribute, but builds upon it as the only ground of expectation and of hope. It is not man making his independent suggestions to infinite wisdom; but it is man, in his conscious dependence, finding the leverage of his own acts in the purposes of the Almighty. This august Being certainly has the right to require the acknowledgment of his supremacy in these daily prostrations before the majesty of his throne; and the creature should properly base his activity upon the pre-existent qualities of him in whose image he was fashioned and which he should continually reflect.

Indeed, the objection before us is equally valid against every form of human activity, and puts the race under bondage to the most iron fatalism which can be imagined. If man cannot pray without throwing suspicion upon the wisdom, benevolence, and power of God, how shall any effort of his will escape the same indictment? Why should the farmer break up the soil, sow the seed, and tend the plant with constant culture until the harvest is reaped? If God in his perfect wisdom and goodness will do what is best for all his creatures, is it not constructively an impeachment of his virtues to interpose our beggarly assistance? And if this be resisted as an impertinence when we pray, why is it not an equal impertinence when we offer to help? Indeed, are not all the forms of human labor so many

expressions of reliance upon the divine fidelity to his promises; and are they not to be construed as prayers which are acted rather than spoken before God? Does not the objection push as far in the one direction as in the other? And can it be arrested in either until it reaches the extremest fatalism which can fetter us with its cruel chains?

Grant that the prayer has no other connection with the divine purpose than as the condition upon which all promised blessings are suspended. Is not God free to choose his own method of distributing his favors? Who shall undertake to restrain his liberty of choice in this or any other matter? Viewed even as an imposed, and not a necessary condition, it is suitable as an acknowledgment of the divine supremacy and of human insufficiency and dependence. Did prayer fulfil no other function than this, it is fully vindicated at the bar of reason; and it is immeasurably justified as the appointed channel through which God's sovereign bounty shall be conveyed. The cope-stone of the argument is found in the fact that man, as made after the likeness of his Creator, must be dealt with in every element of his nature. Prayer grows out of this primal necessity of his being. In the full exercise of his intelligence, conscience, affections, and will, he must touch his maker in them all, in the duty of prayer and in all the activities of life. In both of these alike he honors the attributes on which he builds his own desires and efforts, free from the censure of seeking to supplement that which is infinitely perfect in the God whom he worships.

CHAPTER VI.

SECOND OBJECTION TO PRAYER.

Having no Place in a Government of Law.

WHEN the inspired apostle (2 Peter iii. 3, 4) describes the scoffers who shall arise in the last days, "saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," he would seem to have had before his eye the scientific skeptics of our day, who urge the second objection against prayer, now to be considered. It may be stated thus: As *God governs the universe by determinate and fixed laws, there is no place in such a system for prayer; which is without significance, in that it demands continual intervention in the mechanism of nature.*

It is well to understand at the outset the measure of obligation assumed by us in this discussion. This is not affirmatively to show where or how prayer articulates itself in the government of God, but negatively to investigate the claim that prayer can have no place whatever in that government. It is the objector who affirms; we are simply the respondents in the case. It is his province to advance the argument; it is ours to paralyze it. Our cause is gained if the reader shall render the Scotch verdict against the objection, "Not proven." In a system so vast and complex as the divine government, of which, with all our scientific scrutiny, we see so little, and

which reaches so far back in the purposes of the Eternal Mind, it may be impossible to determine precisely the method by which prayer works out the desired end. No failure in our speculations in this direction can, therefore, set aside the imperative obligation to pray, which rests upon the plain command of God; or annul the necessity of prayer, which has been laid in the very foundation of our nature. The inability to expound the philosophy of prayer is, indeed, a confession of ignorance, which, however it may be regretted, does not imperil the reality and potency of prayer. It only shows that we have no point of view disclosing all parts of this immense government in their reciprocal relations, and as bound together in a solid unity. Were this known to us, we should find all difficulties resolved in the problem of prayer; not only that it is a necessary factor in the divine administration, but also why and how it should be necessary. The responsibility of proof resting thus upon the objector, we are prepared now to sift the allegation which is made.

1. We urge, then, that *this objection abridges God's liberty, in assuming the laws of nature to be so invariable that they can neither be controlled nor suspended by the divine will.* It is surely an unwarranted position, that "the great general laws, inexorable in their operation, and causes in an endless chain of invariable sequence, are the governing powers in nature, and leave no room for any special direction or providential ordering of events."* What is this but to rule the Deity out of the universe which he has created, and

*Argyll's *Reign of Law*, page 59.

to cancel his government of the same? It recognizes him as the Creator of all things, but not as their Ruler. It assumes that his agency terminated when he brought matter into being, when he stamped upon substances their peculiar properties, when he combined these constituent elements in their precise proportions, and when he ordained the fixed methods in which they shall reciprocally act upon each other. These four things being done, his functions cease; henceforward he is shut up behind the screen of his own laws, an idle spectator, watching the grand machinery as it grinds on in its predetermined course. It would seem that an earnest mind must instinctively resile from a proposition so monstrous. It is with profoundest melancholy one must view an orphan world thus flung into space, deprived of the guiding hand of him by whom the wonderful contrivance was devised and fashioned. Nay, when one considers the mighty forces locked up in what we denominate nature, and the terrific explosions which take place in the hurricane, the tempest, and the earthquake, he may well look with terror upon the reckless machine driving forward on its destined path, with no friendly hand upon its valves to control the escaping fury.* Surely this objection against prayer proves too much, when it removes from the management of the universe the wisdom and power by which it was first created. The subject is too solemn to be approached with flippancy of thought or feeling; rather with desire to avoid a conclusion so dismal, than to court the reasoning which necessitates it.

* Dr. Taylor Lewis on the *Fearfulness of Atheism*. *Vedder Lectures* for 1875, in which this thought is elaborated.

But are these mechanical laws essentially, and in their own nature, so invariable as is represented in this theory? If so, then they must be antecedent to the Creator, and are wholly independent of him; for this quality of necessary unchangeableness is the attribute only of what is self-existent and eternal. Those, however, who admit the doctrine of creation must recognize these laws to be only the expression of the Creator's will. They are, therefore, not in themselves invariable, because whenever this will shall be exerted, these laws depending upon the same will be continued, or modified, or suspended. Whatever invariability they manifest is not possessed within themselves, but is given and secured to them by the same will which first ordained them.

The physical laws of the universe are not necessary and unchangeable, like the laws of morality and truth, simply because these last have their foundation not in the acting of the divine will, but in the divine nature lying back of that will. Right, in the very nature of right, must always be the antithesis of wrong, because the holiness of God must always place before us his own rectitude for our guidance. So truth can never be anything but the antagonist of falsehood and error, because he who created man in his own image can put no other law before him than his own truth for his direction. It may be optional with the Deity whether or not to create intelligent beings: but having created them, the necessary holiness and truth of his own nature require the placing before them the standard of perfect rectitude and of absolute truth. The laws of right and of truth are, therefore, in themselves, inca-

pable of suspension or of variation; God, in himself, immutable, is in these respects the law to his creatures. But the laws which move the planets in their orbits, which control the vegetation of plants, which form the dewdrop on the rose-leaf—these physical laws are not necessary, but contingent; they are what they are, because they are so ordained by the Creator's sovereign will. Not having their foundation in the nature of God, but only in his will, this might have chosen a different procedure in the first instance, and has the right to regulate and modify them according to his pleasure.

If it be true that God cannot answer prayer without interfering with the operation of natural law, then be it so. The need for prayer being laid in the dependence of the creature, and the authority for it being clearly revealed in the Bible, if the answer shall imperatively require direct interference with the processes of nature, we maintain there is no such invariability in her laws as shall render change impossible. This being the case, it devolves upon the objector to show on what other grounds God's control of the universe must cease. What, for example, shall be said of the miracle? In granting a revelation to man, it is indispensable that he be protected from imposture. By some infallible sign, the message must be shown to be divine. How shall this be, unless the sign shall be such as God alone can afford, and be given in such form as shall be recognized by the bodily senses? The miracle must be supernatural, as wrought by the immediate power of God; and yet must be accomplished within the sphere of the natural, that it may be open to observation. It is obvious that in the

miracle some of the processes of nature must be arrested and changed, in order to show that the power which controls nature is present to do that which nature herself cannot achieve. It matters not how the divine power, acting in and upon nature, accomplishes the result; whether by suspension of some known law, or by some modification of its action, or by the interposition of a new force superseding it entirely; it is, in every case alike, a special divine act, done for a special end, and within the domain of nature, showing the divine control over all her processes and laws. Thus when Lazarus, who has been sleeping in death four days, so that even his sisters shrink from the test of their faith at his tomb, leaps forth at the life-giving word, it is the divine power accomplishing before the eyes of men what no physical or mechanical law can explain. It is impossible, therefore, in face of the miracle, to affirm any such invariability of natural law as shall put it beyond the power of God to answer prayer, or to justify the assertion that prayer finds no place under an administration of law.

It is not overlooked that those who deny the efficacy of prayer, or that it has a place in the divine economy at all, equally deny the credibility, or even the possibility, of the miracle. But this only proves how far this objection against prayer must logically be pressed. It cannot stop short of the conclusion which thrusts the Deity out from the universe, and leaves it to groan forever under the dominion of a cruel, because a mechanical, fatalism. But the objector will return upon us with the challenge which a philosophic Deism has embalmed in the verse of Pope:

"Think we, like some weak prince, the Eternal Cause
Prone for his favorites to reverse his laws!
Shall burning Etna, if a sage requires,
Forget to thunder, and recall its fires?
On air and sea new motions be impressed,
O blameless Bethel, to relieve thy breast?
Should the loose mountain tremble from on high,
Shall gravitation cease if you go by?

Of course not, we reply. Prayer does not presuppose that every vagrant wish is carried to the throne of God, but that it is offered for things in accordance with his will. It is therefore simple presumption to ask for what is known to contravene that will. It is, for example, the known property of fire to burn; it is the characteristic impressed upon that element by the Creator himself. To put my hand, therefore, in the flame and pray that it may not burn, is not an act of piety, but of pure fanaticism, because the prayer is in opposition to the ascertained will of God. But there are a thousand things in which this will is not ascertained; and in this region of the contingent, which is the sphere of prayer, why should not the worshipper carry his petition to his Father above? In such cases he bases the prayer upon the condition that it is agreeable to that Father's will; and the method by which the answer shall be conveyed is remitted wholly to his discretion. This concerns God alone. If he shall choose to do it by what we call the miracle, or through the interaction of nature's own laws, who has the right to abridge his liberty? One or the other horn of the dilemma must be accepted; either these are, in their origin, independent of God, or they are the ordained expression of his will. The first must be

rejected not only as atheistic and irreligious, but as unphilosophic and absurd—postulating an effect without a cause. If they depend upon his will to be begun, why shall they not depend upon it to be continued and maintained? And why may he not modify them in their action, if only in this way he can answer prayer? To insist upon the opposite is to strip the Divine Being of his personality, and reduce him to a mere philosophic necessity or cause.

This is not offered as a solution of the problem, nor do we here suggest how prayer has an assigned influence under a system operated through law. We simply deny any such persistency in the laws of the universe as shall forbid the divine control of them through which prayer shall be answered. This is what the objection assumes, and which fails, if this be not incontrovertibly established.

2. It will be replied to this, that whether or not the laws of nature are invariable in their essence, the investigations of science show them to be invariable in fact. Let this, then, be granted: that as science widens her research, the more universal does she discover the prevalence of law. What will the objector do with the well-known hypothesis of Dr. Chalmers, that, for aught we can tell, God may have articulated prayer in just such a system of rigorous law, so that, under a law of its own, prayer may be a true cause, with a causal efficiency producing a given effect? We do not say, neither does Dr. Chalmers, that this is actually the case, but it is at least possible; and this cuts away the ground from the assumption that prayer can have no place in a system of law.

Let it be noted that there are different kinds of law—laws of matter for the world of matter; laws of thought for the realm of mind; and spiritual laws in the religious sphere. There is a natural tie which connects material effects with material causes; there is also a moral tie by which moral effects are bound to their moral causes. We observe a given phenomenon, which we immediately trace to its producing cause; this in turn is resolved into an effect, which must be referred to an antecedent cause; and so we ascend by a continuous chain of sequences until we arrive at the power from which the entire chain is suspended. The links may be multiplied indefinitely by which the chain is indefinitely extended, but it cannot hang in mid-air without a ringbolt fastening it to some final support. Now, says Dr. Chalmers, along this extended chain of causes and effects, reaching from earth to heaven, God may have articulated prayer, the subtlest of all causes, far beyond the scrutiny of science, yet with causal efficiency, working its way downward until its due result will be reached in the blessings which it draws upon the creature's head. This suggestion may not be free from difficulties of its own; as, for example, to the exception taken by Dr. McCosh, that it "does not leave that discretion to the divine mind in answering prayer which it is most needful that he should exercise."* Still, the case is supposable, and may be urged with force against the sweep of the objection now under discussion.

But, it is rejoined, this hypothesis can never be

* *The Divine Government, Physical and Moral*, p. 232.

established; neither, on the other hand, can it be disproved. It is not suggested by its author, nor is it presented now, as a solution of the problem of prayer, but simply to turn the assault made against it. An hypothesis which cannot establish a truth may yet serve to detect a fallacy, and, thus far, the use of it is legitimate. The contention is, that prayer is rigidly excluded under a system of invariable law; the reply is, not if prayer be itself a cause working efficiently under its own law. Although only an hypothesis, it must be dislodged before the objection can hold.

3. We draw now to the centre around which this discussion thus far has revolved, and where the sufficient answer is to be found to the objection urged: *That God provides an answer to prayer through the operation of general laws, in the original arrangements of his providence, prayer being simply the necessary condition.* Thus it is not necessary that he shall cross the path of nature, suspend any of its laws, or interpose any obstacle to their freest action. When he created matter and stamped upon it its different properties, when he enacted the laws under which it should be governed, when he made those vast adjustments in nature which science delights to detect and to unfold—in these very adjustments he has provided, through the operation of natural law, to give in the proper time and way the blessings which are solicited in the prayers of his creatures. This is the thesis now submitted to the reader's consideration.

We are often misled by equivocal use of the words which we employ. Thus we speak of the laws of nature, until we invest her with a sort of personality,

dictating her laws as though they emanated from herself. Law, in its proper signification, is "the authoritative expression of will enforced by power." Nature is impersonal, and has no will. She is only as she is made; and her laws are the laws which she must obey rather than enact, which she must receive rather than impose. It is easy to see how the term comes metaphorically to be transferred to her as the originating source. A certain order of events is observed to recur with such uniformity that we at once assign it to an existing and constant cause compelling this recurrence. This uniformity of sequence, with its latent but efficient cause, we cover with the term law, suggesting the necessity of this recurrence, as though nature had the intelligence to will and the authority to enforce. It is important to guard against this illusion by remembering that matter is inert, possessing no properties but such as are impressed upon it, and moving in no courses but such as are appointed to it. Whatever uniformity therefore may be observed in the processes of nature, is due to laws which are framed and executed by a higher wisdom than her own. Behind every event there lies a force adequate to produce it. What this force is we do not know, nor, perhaps, how it exerts its power. Our knowledge extends only to the fact that it exists, that it operates always with constancy and with an exactness which can be definitely measured. Thus the law of gravitation can be stated with all the exactness of mathematical proportions, whilst our ignorance is complete as to the power which produces it. We know the measure of its working, but nothing of its individual essence. We

have reached now a platform upon which we may rest a little. Law has no meaning except as the authoritative expression of a personal will; and in its relation to physical nature is simply the statement and measure of an unknown force. How near we are to placing God in the heart of nature, in this unknown force which is behind every fact, operating through a law which has been imposed from without by an intelligent will!

Science now lifts us to a higher complication, pregnant with deeper results. Every single effect is due to its single cause; but in all events there is not a single force with its single result, but a combination of effects produced by a combination of forces uniting in a joint result. The white light which fills a hemisphere resolves itself into all the colors of the spectrum. The air we breathe and the water we drink consist of different elements combined in fixed proportions, each under the law prescribed for its own action. The earth keeps its appointed orbit by the operation of two antagonistic forces; the one preventing it from falling into the body of the sun, the other from its mad escape into the wilds of infinite space. The calmness of a summer eve depends upon the equilibrium of forces, which, if disturbed, would yield the fierce tornado, or the flashings of an angry cloud. What a marvel of wisdom in these vast collocations of matter, and in these immense adjustments of forces, which afford proof of an infinite Upholder, as well as of an infinite Creator! As these, unknown in themselves, combine and work under laws which point directly up to the will of a personal Being, shall we not find the place for prayer just here, in the bosom of the vast

and complex arrangements of an original Providence? But this is to anticipate.

The science of our day has almost closed its grasp upon the central truth, that what we call the forces in nature are gradually resolving themselves into one grand comprehensive force; thus leading us up to the supreme fountain-head of all power, from which this central force shall be distributed in executing the purposes of a supreme and sovereign will. It is a hypothesis not verified as yet; but those most familiar with the progress of modern discovery more than suspect that light and heat and electricity and magnetism will be shown in the last analysis to be identical, resolvable into one common power, and coming under the operation of one common law. These suggestive hints, united with the recent doctrine of the conservation of energy, have almost guessed the last secret of nature. If it be true that, since the creation of the world, not a particle of matter has been destroyed, and that in all the changes in nature we have only the transmutation of force without the possibility of waste; if these things be true which are now being announced with somewhat of dogmatic authority, is not science leading us up the stairway of her sublimest generalization into the presence of that infinite will sending out this central force from itself to control all the manifestations of matter throughout the visible universe?

Does this seem extravagant? Whence do we derive the notion of force, except from the knowledge that, by the power of our own will, a force is put in exercise, accomplishing the purposes we desire? Thus, we will to move our limbs, and instantly the muscles

are called into action which extend the arm to strike, or the legs to walk. The response is so instantaneous between the obedience of the body and the command of the will, that nothing can be interposed save that mysterious and mechanical power to which we give the name of force. What more do we know concerning the force of gravitation, of heat, of light, of electricity, or of magnetism, than this: That it is a power which, under certain combinations or states of matter, produces the effects which we generalize under these names, respectively? And if, in the final analysis, the very notion of force is derived from the conscious effort of a personal will, how can the inference be avoided that all force in nature must be traced up to the supreme will of him who sits on the throne of the universe? In fact, the alternative is, either to accept the doctrine of a personal God, to the operation of whose will all the energies of nature must finally be ascribed, or to go back to the heathen dogma of a plastic nature, which shall originate within itself all the powers of thought and action involved in the numberless contrivances which evince so much of purpose and design.

History records so many remarkable coincidences between natural events and the public interests which they subserve, as to compel the conviction of a divine response to the anxieties and solicitations of men. Take, for example, the two familiar instances cited by Dr. McCosh: When the Spanish Armada, so proudly termed Invincible, was dashed to pieces on the coast of Albion,* who can doubt the divine interposition to protect the liberties of Protestant Europe seriously

* See account in Hume's History of England, Chap. XLII.

menaced by that popish bigot, Philip II? Or a hundred years later, when William of Orange effected a landing on the English coast through the sudden shifting of the wind at the critical moment when the expedition seemed doomed?* Yet in either case the purpose of an all-wise Providence was accomplished by natural means, through the working of general laws, and without interference with the order of the universe.

This conclusion towards which we have been drifting on a resistless tide, receives cumulative strength from another cardinal truth. The various spheres in which man moves are strictly co-ordinated. He occupies, not separately, but at once and always, the realms of matter, mind, and morals. The laws and forces in each of these may be distinct; but they are all under the authority and control of the same great Ruler to whom man is responsible for his character and acts. How shall this moral supremacy be maintained, unless the government be over an empire which is one in the union of all its parts? Thus, there must not only be co-ordination, as between things that are equal, but subordination also, as between things that are disparate. The lower sphere is taken up into the higher, until all is brought into solid unity. As the world of matter is appropriated and controlled under the laws of thought and reason, so both are drawn up into the religious sphere, and are made to conduce to the eternal interests of the soul. The adjustments, therefore, which exhibit purpose and contrivance in the region of the material and sensible, are by no means confined

*See Macaulay's graphic description, History of England, chap. ix.

there. They are not only found in the intellectual and moral spheres, but these must overlap and embrace the lower relations as well. In these broad and comprepensive adjustments by which all parts of his government are bound up as an undivided whole, the Divine Ruler is able to "make all things work together for good" to his waiting subjects. Here, then, is found the place for prayer in a system of rigid law. In the pre-arrangements of an adorable providence, and by an admirable system of checks and balances through which nature is rendered elastic and full of compensations; in the bosom of these wonderful adjustments prayer finds its seat and its answer.

The temptation is irresistible to present the conclusion of this chapter in the affluent diction of Dr. Chalmers: "God hath in wisdom ordained a regimen of general laws; and, that man might gather from the memory of the past those lessons of observation which serve for guidance of the future, he hath enacted that all those successions shall be invariable which have their fulfilment within the world of sensible experience. Yet God has not, on that account, made the world independent of himself. He keeps a perpetual hold on all its events and processes notwithstanding. He does not dissever himself, for a single instant, from the government and guardianship of his own universe; and can still, notwithstanding all we see of nature's rigid uniformity, adapt the forth-goings of his power to all the wants and all the prayers of his dependent family. For this purpose he does not need to stretch forth his hand on the inferior and the visible links of any progression, so as to shift the known successions

of experience; or at all to intermeddle with the lessons and the laws of this great schoolmaster. He may work in secret, and yet perform all his pleasure—not by the achievement of a miracle on nature's open platform; but by the touch of one or other of those master springs which lie within the recesses of her inner laboratory. There, and at his place of supernal command by the fountain-heads of influence, he can turn whithersoever he will the machinery of our world; and without the possibility of human eye detecting the least infringement on any of its processes, at once upholding the regularity of visible nature and the supremacy of nature's invisible God."*

* See sermon on "The Consistency between the Efficacy of Prayer and the Uniformity of Nature."

CHAPTER VII.

THIRD OBJECTION TO PRAYER.

Unwarranted From Answers Withheld.

THE two objections to prayer already considered are rather scientific than otherwise; that is, they are the objections of unsanctified reason to the doctrine of prayer. In this chapter another presents itself which professes to found upon experience, and is the product of feeling rather than of reason. Though shallow in itself, yet on these two accounts, and because popular in its form, it is the wider in its reach and the more tenacious in its grasp. Stated in dialectic form, it is this: *In the very instances where we might have antecedently anticipated the divine interposition we are often disappointed; leaving the alternative, either that God was unrighteous in his denial, or that his providence did not cover the case, and the prayer was unwarranted and gratuitous.*

It may secure the reader's attention to remark that this dilemma is most apt to be suggested in times of bitter disappointment and grief. A gifted young lawyer once said to the writer of these pages, under what both felt to be a public disaster: "I used to believe in a great many things, but now I am drifting into universal skepticism. I used to believe in human progress, but now history seems to move in a narrow circle; and Solomon was about right when he wrote 'the thing that hath been is the thing that shall be'; I

used to believe in civilization, but now culture seems only to make a man a more cunning savage, the velvet paw only concealing the tiger's claw; I used to believe in Providence, which, as my pious mother taught me, upholds and governs all things; now I am not certain there is a God." What answer could be returned to this wail of despair but this? "My friend, you and I are the last persons who can afford to do without God, for we particularly need him just now." The incident is recited in this connection as showing how the irritated heart is prone to fly out against God and his providential dispensations in seasons of great distress and anguish. It is this that makes the present objection so fraught with danger to those who, in this tempestuous life, are brought to the wreck of all their hopes. It will be the aim of this chapter to unmask the fallacies which lurk within it.

There are three directions in which we are liable to mistake in reference to unanswered prayer: we may err in judgment, supposing that we are asking for what is right, which the issue may show to be otherwise; or we may be at fault in the spirit and temper of the prayer, which failure, in the fundamental condition of true prayer, explains the miscarriage; or we may sadly misconstrue the whole providence of God in relation to the answer which was expected. The fallacy is to be sought in one or the other of these three directions—in the matter of the prayer, or its manner, or in the response to it. Let us examine and see.

1. *We may err in assuming the request to be intrinsically right, justifying a confident appeal to the divine*

integrity. The objector urges that his prayer in a particular case should have been heard; and that the withholding of a favorable answer proves either that the Divine Being was unjust, or else that his providence had no jurisdiction in the premises. The assumption here, on which the reasoning turns, is, that God was under obligation to hear and grant that special request. Now, there are two classes of objects which may be covered in prayer: The first embraces all things about which the divine will is clearly ascertained; in reference to which nothing remains but to believe the promise and to pray in constant expectation of the answer. Thus we pray for our daily bread, by which we are nourished; and thus we should pray for sanctifying grace, whereby we are "filled with the fruits of righteousness." God may see fit to delay the answer even to these prayers, which are definitely prescribed; or he may answer them by methods so unexpected that we shall fail to trace the connection with our petitions. Nevertheless, the duty is simply to believe and pray and wait, until the response is given. In this case there can be no doubt as to the matter of the prayer, that it is for things agreeable to God's will. The answer must come in the time and way determined by infinite wisdom; "for the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; for it will surely come, it will not tarry."

But there are other things falling into the second class, in regard to which the will of God is not antecedently known; perfectly certain as to God, but contingent as to man, to whom the disclosure comes only

through the issue. Here the prayer is to be offered with entire submission to the sovereign pleasure of him who will give or withhold at his own discretion. Where the will of God is not revealed, how is the objector to know that he is bound in righteousness to afford a favorable answer? Until this knowledge is absolute, the alternative which he presents does not exhaust all the suppositions in the case. There is the disagreeable, but very probable, supposition that he has been desiring what he ought not to have, and which nothing can excuse but his own ignorance of the fact; and which, therefore, the divine righteousness, so confidently invoked, is compelled to refuse. When the plea comes to be examined, it amounts only to a presumption, more or less strong, but insufficient to justify so bold a claim. The prayer may be thought to rest upon a solid foundation, such as the known perfections of God, or the admitted principles of the divine government; but what a margin is here for the widest mistakes of interpretation! Who can claim such an *a priori* knowledge of God's character as to pronounce infallibly what he is under obligation to do in every case? Who is so versed in the diplomacy of heaven as to detect every principle of the divine administration? Man's judgment often fails in the earthly sphere, and he must hold all his opinions open to the correction of superior light. In addition to this peril, arising from the limitations of his knowledge, how is he in danger of being warped by his prejudices, and of being seduced by his passions! Shall such a being, who constantly trips in the earthly walk, and mourns the errors which have made the life here one

huge blunder—shall such a being intrude within the supernatural sphere, and interpret the cipher in which the Most High conceals the secret of his purpose? The objection is, therefore, illogical; since, with a possible error in the assumption, the alternative presented is not exhaustive. The fatal flaw in the reasoning, which infers simply from the silence of the Deity, is, that the prayer may be at fault in the very substance of the request.

2. *The matter of the prayer may be right, while its spirit may be wrong; and thus lacking the first element of prayer, it is discounted as worthless.* Prayer must have its boundary within the divine will. This arises from the supremacy of the Creator and the dependence of the creature. Nothing can be desired by the latter which is not already known to the former—and known because included within his sovereign will. Nothing can be executed on earth which was not embraced in the purpose of heaven. The prayer, then, which springs out of a sense of emptiness and want, must recognize the provision already made in the divine counsels for its supply. Its first acknowledgment is the sovereignty of that wisdom and goodness upon which it relies for succor. It opens with a filial submission of its wishes to the discretion of one whose office as ruler requires the revision of all requests by his superior wisdom and judgment. Without this submissiveness of spirit the prayer lacks its fundamental condition. It ceases to be prayer, and degenerates into a wild foray upon the divine prerogatives. In man's present sinful estate, the opportunities for mistake are fearfully multiplied. The prayer may be

insolent, dictating to the Almighty rather than supplicating his favor. It may be arrogant, claiming as a right what can only be accorded as a privilege. It may be presumptuous, disregarding, like that of Cain, the appointed way of approach to the mercy-seat. It may be intensely selfish, having regard only to the creature's advantage rather than to the honor of him who is supreme. It may be impertinent, robbing God of all discretion in the time and mode of the answer. In these and other conceivable ways, the spirit of true prayer may be wanting—evinced by the resentment which flaunts its defiance against God in the very objection now before us. Thus, whilst in substance proper to be urged, the fault in its temper causes it to be disallowed; and in this rejection the divine jurisdiction is as clearly vindicated as in the most propitious response which could be given. If, as previously shown, prayer is the condition precedent rather than a producing cause, in which the human will blends with the divine, and man's fitness to receive the promised blessing is indicated, then the absence of the necessary condition rests the denial of the prayer on that very rectoral justice of God which the objection assails. There was really no prayer, in any true sense, to be answered at all. Thus, again, the alternative presented as conclusive against the utility of prayer, fails to exhaust the suppositions in the case; and the reasoning is shown to be inconclusive.

3. *The prayer may have been unexceptionable, both in its substance and in its spirit, whilst the providence of God may have been misconstrued in relation to the an-*

swer. It is mainly here that human judgment is most likely to err. It will be necessary, therefore, to enter into several specifications:

(1.) *God's providence is projected upon a scale too large for us to measure; and for aught we can tell, the precise answer to our request might derange the wider plans known only to himself.* The objection would have greater force were we the only pensioners upon his bounty; but with us are the millions more on the earth, equally the objects of his care. All these sustain their individual relations to him, by whom they have been fashioned and upheld; but none the less do they all stand in closer or more remote relations to each other. These personal histories are so many separate threads to be woven into the web of his general providence, each having its own position in the loom, and matching with its own shade every other color necessary to fill out the requirements of the pattern. Even this does not present the complication as it is. Not only must every individual career blend into the general history of all cotemporary with it among the living, but it must fuse into the lives of the generations which are dead, taking up their issues and weaving them into the plans and purposes of their own living thought. Nor does even this overtake the boundless stretch of that adorable providence of which we have undertaken to speak. God has other worlds besides this little earth, and other orders of intelligent beings besides man, to be covered beneath his protecting wing. All these countless units make their single record under a sleepless providence, which watches over them with individual care; yet with a

comprehensive wisdom must they be swept into the circle of one stupendous plan, in which the history of all must embrace the story of each; and in this vast interblending of destinies God shall read only his one eternal, undivided thought. In this all-comprehending providence which sweeps into its control the beings of all worlds, through all space and through all duration of time, all are, without exception, under the government of general laws which are not to be violated, and possess their individual sphere of action which is not to be invaded.

In a scheme so vast and complex as this, can we place the finger on this or that spot and say, antecedently, what it is proper for the Deity to do just there, unless we know its relation to the grand whole? It is not the entire circle which we see, but only the smallest segment. The peasant thinks the earth a flat disc; in the wider range of science he discovers it to be a round ball. He thinks it stable and fixed; a larger induction gives him the immense circuit and the amazing velocity of its motion. We are in like manner ignorant of God's total providence, having only its minutest parts upon which to frame a judgment. It is absurd, therefore, to say that this providence does not embrace us, when it is just this relation to it in the immensity of its range which may compel the denial of our prayer.

(2.) *The answer may be only postponed as a means of moral discipline.* The key to the interpretation of this earthly life is, that it is a state of discipline. It is rendered such by the intervention of grace, which provides and offers a redemption from the curse and pun-

ishment of sin. We are here to be educated for a higher and holier sphere, and each life is ordered, in all its details, to develope and cultivate the virtues which shall fit us for that higher state. Hence the faith which must rest eternal hopes upon the pledge of the divine veracity, without craving the testimony of sense in regard to things unseen. Hence the patience which waits upon the divine will in the execution of all the promises; and hence, too, the continuous discipline by which these and co-ordinate graces are brought to their fulness of growth and ripeness of fruit. We cannot, perhaps, appreciate the wisdom of this moral training, the more beneficial in proportion to its severity, until we reach the results in the world of reward. It will be the peculiar happiness of the redeemed, that the whole of life's painful experience will be poured into song before the presence of the throne.

The infirmity of our nature, however, betrays itself in the haste with which we misjudge the dealings of God with us. We say God does not hear, when in his higher wisdom the answer is only delayed to adorn us with the graces of humility, patience, and hope. It should not be forgotten, too, that the Divine Being is under obligation to himself as well as to his creatures. He must vindicate his own sovereignty in the fulfilment of his pledges. It is astonishing that God should seem to fetter his own movement by oath or promise of any sort; but the more he binds himself, the more necessary becomes the illustration of his perfect freedom. Not only was he sovereign in the first disclosure of grace to the sinner, but in the outworking of that

grace in the after experience must there be the current assertion of a supreme will which the creature shall reverently recognize and obey. Thus while the promise may be absolute which is given, there is a reservation as to the time and mode of fulfilment, which is a fresh reminder of the subject's dependence upon the will of his King. The methods also by which prayer is finally answered come as so many surprises, bringing the creature to a fresh persuasion and acknowledgment of the divine supremacy. The delay of the answer, so necessary to the vindication of Jehovah, becomes thus an important factor in our religious training; yet it is rashly assumed, in the objection before us, as the basis of the charge that prayer is unwarranted and unprofitable.

(3.) *The present denial may be ordered for the purpose of securing the answer which is desired.* It is not well to be at cross-purposes with God, in the intricacies of that complex providence to which reference has already been made. The benefit we ask it may be his will to confer; but the jewel must have its own setting. In the impatience of desire it may be sought when the providential arrangement for others shall require a disentanglement from these before the petition can be granted. Take a concrete illustration from a case within the writer's personal knowledge. An anxious mother wept with bitter tears on finding all the rooms in a certain steamer preëngaged, by which she was detained a fortnight in the city of New York, after a summer's absence from her distant home. But the sorrow was turned into thanksgiving when, within a few days, she learned that this vessel

was buried in the depths of the treacherous ocean. Earnest was her desire to look upon the faces of the children at home, and keen was the disappointment of that unexpected delay. The prayer was denied, only that it might be answered: and to this end, she must first be separated from those whose fate was to be drowned. This typical case, better than any reasoning, will set forth the principle announced above. God takes care of his own, through easy and natural combinations in his providence; and often it is recognized as the answer to prayer, only when it is set over against a previous denial.

A larger instance is furnished in the history of ancient Israel. Four hundred years did the promise made to Abraham slumber, before it was redeemed in the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. They are brought out thence under a distinct promise of being led into the land of Canaan. Yet forty years of wandering must first be accomplished. Did this delay forfeit the divine pledge given of old to all the patriarchs? Nay, it is only thus it could be redeemed at all. The sottish generation which came out of Egypt was unfit to enter the "land flowing with milk and honey." Those could not grapple with the sons of Anak, whom the mere report of their size filled with cowardly fear. Those children of bondage were not the race to found an empire, and rule its destiny. Hence, the promise assured in the covenant can only be fulfilled through a generation reared under the discipline of the desert. The denial of many a fervent prayer came before its final answer. Thus a thousand times in the history of the church, the march to victory and triumph is through antece-

dent defeat. How then shall the flippant argument stand, that God's present silence is of necessity the denial of his people's prayer?

(4.) *God may answer prayer, not in form but in substance, by the substitution of higher blessings than those asked for.* In such cases the answer reaches the petitioner, as it were, in disguise. While he is looking for it in a certain shape, lo, it comes in another form and from another side. He may trace the hand of a Father in the bestowal; but he does not discover the exchange in the gift, because he does not see the connection with his prayer as accepted before God. Yet the moment the disclosure is made, a fervent gratitude recognizes that divine love has exceeded the desire in bestowing that which an instructed heart would surely have preferred. Thus David, in response to God's gracious covenant with him, exclaims "and yet this was a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come."* In like manner God gave to Solomon not only the "wisdom and knowledge" for which he prayed, but also "riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings had before him."† In the New Testament, the apostle sets forth this principle in the grand doxology with which he closes his prayer for the Ephesian Christians, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think."‡ It would be easy to furnish familiar instances of this in the daily experience of the pious. A mother bends over her sick babe, and with the instinct of motherly affection prays

* 2 Sam. vii. 19. † 2 Chron. i. 12. ‡ Eph. iii. 20.

fervently for its recovery. But if the conviction should find lodgment in her heart that its early removal may be the fixed condition of its eternal salvation, her prayer finds its answer in the higher blessing which swallows up the lower; in view of which she becomes more than reconciled to her bereavement.

In thoughts like these one finds the realization of Doddridge's famous dream, who passed into the spirit-world to find the map of his own life traced upon the wall of his chamber. Running his eye along the mysterious lines, he discovered every disappointment and trial to have been ordained in the wisdom of infinite love; and by God's super-abounding grace, heaven was reached through the prayers which were answered in the larger blessings exceeding all that he had ventured to implore.

These specifications disclose the difficulty of interpreting divine providence, especially when we are in the swell of the current. Until we shall have power to look through the entire scheme in all of its adaptations, we are incompetent to assume the failure of any prayer offered in the faith of God's goodness and power. The reasoning, then, from occasional disappointment in tracing the answer to prayer, falls to the ground as inconsequent.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOURTH OBJECTION TO PRAYER.

The Prayer of the Wicked an Abomination.

THE fourth objection to prayer is in terms like these: *that acceptable prayer presupposes a proper state of heart, in the absence of which it becomes an abomination to God, to be suppressed rather than encouraged.* The audacity of this plea should be its refutation. Stripped of ambiguity, it means that the want of inclination to pray absolves from its obligation. Thus what is our fault is made the excuse for wilful and persistent neglect of a plain duty. The difficulty arises from the fact that our nature is perverted by sin. The conscience is debauched and the affections are estranged from God; so that all desire is lost for fellowship and communion with him. But what is this but the essence of our guilt; which is stated with the highest emphasis when it is said that it lies in our very nature to love and to do that which is wrong? The principle here affirmed leads to conclusions so appalling, that a fallacy must lurk somewhere. Let us seek to detect it.

1. *It does not hold in the sphere of our earthly relations, and is unsound in reference to human law.* Suppose a debtor to acknowledge the justice of a claim against him, and then to offer the plea for not discharging it that he is constitutionally selfish and dishonest, having no regard for the individual rights of

others, nor for the interests of society at large. What, in such a case, would be the verdict of the court? What, except to say that the defence is worse than the crime; that the climax of villainy is reached when the culprit renders his offence as his excuse? The recklessness with which it is blazoned forth, without even the blush of shame, is the distinguishing mark of the deepest depravity.

Or suppose another indicted for robbery and murder, to plead that he could not help obeying an instinct prompting irresistibly to plunder and bloodshed. What has human law to reply to such a defence? What, but to say that law proceeds upon the idea that men are responsible, though they be wicked; and that it forges penalties for those who will not repress an evil nature, which shall render the consequences of indulgence more painful than the discomforts of restraint? If, then, under imperfect human law such a plea would be scourged with the detestation and horror it is sure to inspire, what treatment must it receive under a government absolutely pure and holy, such as that of Jehovah; whose inflexible justice can never turn from the protection of the good nor from the prosecution of the criminal?

2. *The principle is unsound, in that it dispenses with the obligation to practice any virtue or to attempt any reform.* The virtues of justice, truth, temperance, chastity, and the like cease to be obligatory as soon as they become distasteful and irksome. The opposite vices cease to be vices as soon as, by indulgence and habit, they become the law of one's being. How monstrous the proposition: and what exposure does it re-

quire but its own offensiveness! It openly assumes that whatever of responsibility may attach at the beginning of an earthly career, diminishes as it proceeds; that when the education is complete in sin, guilt has reached the vanishing point where all obligation to virtue is at an end. Thus sin becomes its own justification, and finally its own cure. A man has only to continue a vicious course until it becomes a necessity, and then personal responsibility terminates. When "his own iniquities have taken the wicked himself, and he is holden with the cords of his sins," instantly he is transformed into an angel of light—rendered clean and pure simply through the excess of his own filthiness and guilt. Upon this hypothesis all distinction between virtue and vice is effaced, as well as between truth and falsehood, between right and wrong. The foundations are destroyed, society is dissolved, government and law wholly disappear. Can a principle be sustained which lands in chaos like this?

By the same reasoning the return to a life even comparatively stainless is precluded. Repentance and faith, which, in the double testimony of conscience and Scripture God enjoins upon the sinner, are vacant of meaning; yet no act of the conjurer can dissolve the imperative obligation of both. If obedience to law is the first duty of the creature, repentance and confession become the corresponding obligation of the transgressor. The sinner is always bound, not only to be sorry for his fault, but to return to the obedience in which he has failed; the one duty is as supreme as the other, being exact co-ordinates. Equally so with faith. In whatever mode the Deity shall be disclosed,

he is to be accepted and adored. It may be only "the hem of his garment" that is touched in the revelation of nature; yet, according to the measure of light, he is to be received and acknowledged. Nothing can absolve from this first and most sacred tie which binds man to the being in whose image he was formed. Yet in the face of all this, the recusant is taught to reply that, with his sinful heart, he is unable to believe or to repent; and at once all the commands of God are erased from the conscience forever. Thus all morality is canceled when virtue is no longer to be practised, nor is vice ever to be forsaken.

3. *Our duties to God rest exclusively upon our relations to him, in regard to which the consciousness of responsibility is inextinguishable.* This has been sufficiently shown of prayer in a preceding chapter, the general purport of which is all that needs now to be rehearsed. The infinite sufficiency of the Creator is recognized in the acknowledgment of the creature's emptiness and want; his holiness, in the confession of sin; his justice, in the supplication for pardon; whilst the divine supremacy receives the homage of worship rendered to Jehovah in the unity and perfection of all his attributes. So long, therefore, as the creature survives, these relations continue; and, of course, the duties arising from them can never cease. Whatever changes may occur in his condition or character, the obligations of a creature rest still upon him. He may lapse into a state of hopeless depravity, and his disability to the practice of virtue may be entire, no relaxation of the original obligations can possibly ensue. So long as he retains intelligence and reason

he is held responsible, however spiritually helpless to perform the duties binding upon him as man. This is true under the administration of both human and divine justice. The drunkard, for example, is so enslaved by his appetite as to be morally incapable of resisting the temptation to its indulgence; yet he is reckoned guilty, under both human and divine judgment—criminal in the single act, and in the very depravity of appetite which renders temperance to him impossible.

It will be urged now that, so far as this discussion has gone, the real force of the objection has been evaded because not fully stated. The attempt to show that the essential criminality lies in the disinclination of the heart pleaded as its excuse, it is rejoined, applies only to those cases in which this disinclination has been superinduced by the transgressor himself. It will be conceded that when one lapses voluntarily from a state of virtue to bondage under sin, as in the instance of the drunkard above, he is to be held responsible for his apostasy and for all the consequences to which it may lead. But this is not the case supposed in the present argument, which is that of one who is born with a sinful nature entailed upon him as an inheritance, with a bias to evil antecedent to the first act he shall perform, and which must discolor his whole life from the beginning to its close. This, it is alleged, is the problem to be grappled with—how one shall be obliged to practice any virtue, or to perform any duty, when the disinclination to both is inherited from birth, in the nature corrupted at its source and transmitted to him by those who went before.

This grave difficulty is met by some, in the distinction which is drawn between the natural ability and the moral disability of the sinner. It is said, that whilst sin has destroyed the inclination to goodness in man, it has not deprived him of the natural faculties which constitute him a responsible being. He still possesses reason, conscience, affections and will; these are essential to him as man, and upon the possession of these is grounded the responsibility for all his acts. It has been well replied to this, however, that just as the distinction may be in itself, in this particular case it is little else than a juggling with words. The moral indisposition which constitutes the inability here, is now a part of that nature which is inherited at birth; the distinction fails as soon as the moral becomes the natural inability as well. We must go deeper than this to find the ground of responsibility for this moral inability itself.

Beyond a doubt, we are brought face to face with the deepest mysteries of the Christian faith—mysteries insoluble, probably, to human reason. The question as to the origin of evil remains unanswered, even with the story of the Fall before us in the Scriptures, and with the superabundant evidence of the existence of sin in the lives of all the generations since the days of Adam. Not less mysterious is the transmission of that sinful nature, which carries with it this inability to all good, now the subject of our discussion. Is it satisfactory simply to refer to the law of heredity, and to say that, as like produces like, so Adam, becoming a sinner, can transmit only the sinful nature which he has? This may explain the mode of the transmission, but not its

reason; it tells us how we are born sinners, but not why; it does not yield the ultimate ground upon which this transmission rests, and upon which it shall be vindicated. It is easy enough to see why man, who is a sinner, should be condemned and punished; it flows necessarily from the justice of God over a being who stands to him in the relation of a subject under law.

But the question here is, Why do all men come into the world sinners, and upon what principle shall they be held accountable for evil dispositions which belong to the nature which they simply inherit? It is very plain that God did not create them sinners, for this would make him the author of sin, which is the most violent self-contradiction which can be put into words, since we know nothing of sin except from its antagonism to the holiness of the Divine Being himself. This moral inability of the sinner, which is nothing more than his disinclination to the service and fellowship of God, must be construed, therefore, as a penal infliction upon the descendants of fallen Adam;* the penalty of spiritual death visited upon him for his transgression, and conveyed by natural descent to all his posterity who were legally in him as their representative and head. By this double relation sustained to him, his act becomes their act in law, and thus their destiny is bound up in his. His obedience would have been construed in law as their obedience; even as his apostasy became theirs, and his sinful estate their inheritance, with all the disabilities consequent thereon. It is upon this ground the sinner is held responsible for

* Thornwell's Theological Lectures, No. 13, *Collected Writings*, Vol. I., in which this whole subject is ably discussed.

the unholy disposition which disables him from acceptable worship of God. Condemned already in his federal head, he cannot be absolved from the penalty he has incurred, and is responsible for the disobedience in which he continues. The whole matter resolves itself into that constitution ordained at the beginning, in which the dealing of God with the human race was transacted with a federal head; with whom, in his public and official capacity, all his descendants were considered a unit in law.

This brings us to the pinch of the problem before us: Was this constitution a just one, in which the fate of the whole race was put in the keeping of a single representative? Observe, there is no denying the fact that all men are sinners, and that they begin their sinful course from the first dawn of intelligence, under an original and constant bias to evil; all this, too, with a sense of personal responsibility, which they cannot shake off. These are the factors in this difficult problem. If they had been created thus, or if a deformed moral nature had been handed down by the simple law of descent, it might have been mourned as a grievous natural calamity, but would never have been the ground of self-accusation and reproach. As has been well said, it would be recognized as misfortune, but not as guilt. The latter can only attach where there is antecedent responsibility, and with this a sense of blameworthiness. The different theories proposed, on which to ground this antecedent responsibility, seem either unintelligible, or inadequate to the solution of the difficulty. It is urged, for example, that by our individual sins we endorse the original

apostasy of our first father, thus assuming his guilt, and making it our own. This explanation is exceedingly simple, and would be satisfactory did it reach to the roots of the case. It reverses, however, the whole order of procedure, putting actual transgression before the nature from which it springs, and leaving it to be accounted for as an effect without a cause. The stream is traced up to the fountain whence it issues, and then, changing its place, becomes the source from which the fountain itself breaks forth. The sins we daily commit may certify a preëxisting evil nature, but cannot be the ground upon which its penal character must rest. Nor is this all. If the inherited nature be not sinful, and condemned as such, it is hard to see how the acts flowing from it can be denounced as sinful, and come under just condemnation. The stream cannot rise higher than its source, but must derive its quality from the spring with which, in its perpetual flow, it must ever be identified. The acts simply unfold and express the nature which is continually manifesting itself through them.

Various metaphysical attempts have been made to justify the transmission of a sinful nature upon such a unity between Adam and his posterity as shall make them, not merely legally and putatively, but actually and truly guilty of his sin. Individually and personally, they did not as yet exist; yet, being in him, not constructively and potentially, but substantively and in fact, their agency is blended with his in the first transgression. Subtle speculations of this sort, however, remain unintelligible as when first announced, after all the explanations have been afforded. They

may well be pretermitted here, since, even if established, they do not assist in resolving the problem before us. The question would still remain whether such a relation itself between Adam and his descendants can be vindicated as just and righteous.

Clearing these away, we are brought to the simple facts which all these theorists equally accept: that it pleased God not to bring the individuals of the human race into being together, so as to place them singly on probation, but to develop them from a single pair. Of all these hereafter to spring from his loins, the first man was constituted the representative and head—the federal relation founding upon the natural, as being limited and defined by it. The race was put on probation in the person of its head, who is no longer a private individual, but a public and official representative. The relation which it shall sustain to God is to be determined by his fidelity to this great trust. If he shall continue holy as when first created, the same holy estate will be transmitted to his posterity as the condition in which they shall be born; if he fall from his integrity, they are involved in his condemnation, and inherit the corrupt nature which is derived from him. Such is the constitution under which the human family was placed, as distinguished from that under which the angels were created; at least so far as we may judge from the glimpses afforded of their condition. Shall it be said now of this economy that it is not fair and just? This is implied in the objection which excuses from the duty of prayer, on the ground that the disability to its performance was not induced by the sinner himself, but was received as an inheri-

tance from the first founder of the race. It is a momentous issue which is herein joined.

First of all, *It should conclude debate that it is a dispensation appointed by God himself.* It may be impossible to trace the secret connections in a scheme of providence so vast as that under which mankind has been put; and the reasons which underlie and support it may be wisely concealed. It may be a necessary feature of it as an educational process, that it should be a system of faith rather than of knowledge—that those subjected to its training should throughout defer to the wisdom and integrity of him by whom it was ordained. It should suppress the first suspicion of injustice, that God is its author. Every divine attribute guarantees the equity of the entire policy; and injustice, if it could exist, would operate the instant dissolution of the divine government throughout the universe. The argument of David is conclusive: "I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." If man can rely with measure of confidence on the deductions of his own fallible reason, there can be no surer ground of trust than the wisdom which is infallible. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Secondly, *So far is this representative economy from being unjust, it is characterized throughout by the truest benevolence.* It will be necessary here to look at its distinctive features:

(*a*), By it the probation of man was reduced within a prescribed limitation of time. This could not be under a system exclusively legal. The law can only say to the subject, so long as you obey you shall be

happy; but the penalty must hang over his head, like the sword of Damocles, through his whole existence. Ever liable to fall from his integrity, the law must continue its lien upon his life for its own protection. When it is said, your period of trial shall be limited, after which, if faithful to your trust, you shall be confirmed in a state of holiness and blessedness forever; this is clearly not the language of law, but of grace. It is not a right which can be claimed as due, but is the bestowal of undeserved favor. Now it is exactly this benefit which accrues from the covenant made with Adam: the race of mankind is not put upon indefinite probation; but, in the exercise of divine benevolence, a limit is assigned beyond which it shall not extend.

(*b*), The motives to obedience with Adam were the strongest that could operate. It was not only his own personal safety, and the prospect of unspeakable happiness and honor as his portion forever; but in addition to this, the safety and happiness of untold millions within his loins. Man, even in his fallen estate, is keenly alive to the solemnity of a trust. It is an overwhelming reflection, that other lives are irrevocably bound up in ours; and that by a single act their maledictions may be brought on our guilty heads. Carry the thought, then, up to the first father in the garden of Eden, in his primitive holiness with all its quivering nerve-like sensibilities. What must it have been to him to be the depositary of such a trust? What a thought, if he should come under the anathema of the august Being who had invested him with it? What sublime dignity would be his, as the father of happy myriads who through eternity shall stand in the light

of his glory as their representative and head? And what eternal disgrace must follow dereliction here, if a suffering posterity must load his memory with this public crime and its awful issues? If probation must be passed, it is gracious and kind to place it under the pressure of all the motives which may secure its termination in safety and triumph.

(*c*), The probation was not only limited as to time, but narrowed in the extent of the trial itself. Unquestionably, law must cover the entire nature of the being under its authority; and thus there are many avenues by which temptation may enter with solicitation to sin. Under a scheme of hard and naked law, man might have been assailed by spiritual foes at all the points thus opened to assault. But Jehovah saw fit in this representative probation to restrict the trial to a single test, and this the simplest and easiest imaginable. No hard service is required; but only to abstain from the fruit of one interdicted tree, in a garden filled with all that could please the eye or delight the palate. Obedience to this one command would test the spirit of obedience to law, in the whole breadth of human duty; and, therefore, the trial was made to turn upon a point in itself morally indifferent, having no other foundation except the bare authority by which it was imposed. Only by this avenue was the tempter permitted to approach; and at this one gate was man to place himself under guard from the danger of apostasy. What form of trial could have been devised more lenient in its demands or more helpful to a favorable issue?

(*d*), It should silence all complaint that upon this

principle of representation is founded the method of grace, by which sin shall be arrested in its destructive course, and be finally eliminated as a disturbing element in the government of the universe. If there was a first Adam who failed in obedience, and plunged his posterity into ruin, there is also a second Adam who has "magnified the law and made it honorable." By his obedience unto death the penalty is met, the curse is removed, and eternal salvation acquired for all who are found in him by a living faith. The parallel between the two is exactly traced in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; making it evident that the first covenant with the first Adam was but the scaffolding to the second covenant with the second Adam. The procedure in both turns upon this principle of federal headship, the justice and benevolence of which we are now considering.

The benefits arising from the work of Christ, the second Adam, are not to be restricted to the redeemed of our race alone. He is the author of that grace by which the angels are confirmed indefectibly in holiness and bliss; and in consequence of which "angels and authorities and powers are made subject unto him." Nor is the grandeur of the Saviour's work understood, nor the full benefit of it measured, until at the end we shall see the serpent's head forever crushed. Not until the great dragon shall be bound and cast forever into the bottomless pit, together with sin and death; not until the mighty Conqueror shall be seen to have really "finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, and brought in everlasting righteousness"; not until sin shall find its only abode in the pit to which

it is consigned in eternal despair, and the universe purged of its baleful presence shall rejoice in the light of perfect holiness and love forever; not until the consummation is reached, and "the times of restitution of all things" shall come from the presence of the Lord, will it be known what is the fulness of blessing which lay in the redeeming work of Christ on earth. These are topics too large to be discussed in this merely incidental reference to them. They are mentioned here only because they extinguish the last cavil against the doctrine of federal headship, upon which they are all based. If the principle be sound in the case of the second Adam, it will be hard to prove it unjust in the case of the first Adam.

Thirdly, It is singular that this principle, by which one stands for another in law, should be so bitterly denounced *when it meets us everywhere in human life, one of the constructive principles on which society rests.* What are we to make of the suretyship upon which the transactions of commercial business are so largely based? How is it that we must delegate to representatives in our national and domestic legislatures the making of laws which we are compelled to obey? How is it that ambassadors at foreign courts can bind by their official acts the governments which they severally represent? If it should be replied that, in these instances, the representatives are, in a measure, under control as originally chosen or appointed by ourselves, even this is not true as to thousands who never had a voice in their designation to office. But setting this aside, what are we to say of the wars waged through the past to gratify the ambition, or to appease the

wrath of kings ruling by hereditary right over nations suffering beneath their sway? Take the human race at any period of time, or in any country of the globe, and they obey laws and rulers never submitted to their choice and yet completely shaping their destiny. If we go down into the family, children are born of parents whom they never selected, receive from them the very features by which they are distinguished, take the place in society occupied by their natural sponsors, and inherit often the vices and diseases by which their career was disfigured. We can look nowhere around without recognizing this principle of representation, as it ramifies through all the departments and conditions of human life; in the face of which it becomes a little ludicrous when it is denounced as inherently vicious in the divine administration.

Fourthly, *The complete refutation of the objection is furnished in the indestructible consciousness of individual responsibility.* It is obvious that, if the divine government is to maintain its ascendency unbroken, it must secure a permanent hold upon the nature of man. This control is lodged in the conscience which, as the organ of law, responds ever to the authority of the lawgiver; and there is nothing more portentous to the transgressor than the vitality of those moral convictions fastened upon us by the conscience. In all the changes of his earthly career, they attend him; in every stage of moral depreciation they follow him as avenging furies. There is no escape by change of place; wherever he may rove from world to world through the immensity of space, he is overtaken by them as spectres of the guilty past. Even in hell,

under that supreme disability which arises from the last penal infliction of outraged justice, there is no relief from the self-accusations which constitute "the worm that dieth not" and "the fire that is not quenched." Conscience may be drugged by opiates administered to it; yet even when it fails to discharge the office of judge, it never relaxes its vigilance as detective. Sooner or later it will rise from its lethargy to fulfil all its functions of witness, judge and final tormentor of the lost. It is a part of our being—indestructible as the soul itself—and from it there can be no deliverance whilst ourselves remain. Next to the testimony of Holy Writ, this is the irrefragable argument for the punishment of the wicked hereafter. The elements of their anguish are within them, as Milton has impressively described:

> "Me miserable! which way shall I fly
> Infinite wrath and infinite despair?
> Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
> And in the lowest deep a lower deep,
> Still threatening to devour me, opens wide,
> In which the hell I suffer seems a heaven."

If, however, the entire economy of representative government, under which men are brought into the world in the possession of a derived sinful nature, is indefensible, then this testimony of conscience against the sin, both of character and of life, is false, and man's whole nature is a lie. The sense of ill-desert and shame is the protest of conscience that the dispensation is just and righteous under which all this evil exists in the world. No feeling of censure could possibly arise without a just ground of responsibility on which to rest. Every man knows that his thoughts,

desires, and acts are his own; that he is answerable for the same, whatever their character may be; and that the censure is greatest when the taint is seen to be from an evil nature from which it spontaneously proceeds. Whether, therefore, we can or cannot satisfy our reason as to this mode of dealing with the race in the person of a single representative, its propriety is put beyond question in this testimony of our consciousness of responsibility, which has been constant and uniform with all the generations that have lived on the earth.

4. Finally, *The objection is swept away by the ample provision in the gospel to meet the sinner's difficulty.* Grace undertakes not only the removal of the guilt of sin, but also of its corrupt dominion, and at length of its being and presence. The deliverance is complete in all the aspects of sin, as man's unhappy inheritance; and the disability of which the sinner complains goes with all the rest. It is not required here to detail the method of salvation, how it is wrought out and how it is individually applied. The simple fact of its sufficiency is all that is involved here. When the command is given to the paralytic, "stretch forth thy hand," power accompanies the word to do the impossible deed. When the call penetrates the tomb in which Lazarus has been sleeping four days, power issues from him who is "the resurrection and the life," and he that was "bound with grave-clothes" came forth to newness of life.

So it is with the sinner in his spiritual helplessness and death. The command to believe and repent is a gracious pledge that power will be given to perform

what is otherwise impossible to the "carnal mind that is enmity against God." The duty of prayer is thus bound anew upon the sinner, under the assurance that the impossible is with God always that which is done. The pledge of divine grace is implied in the command: "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." When, therefore, it is argued that prayer should be suppressed rather than offered unacceptably before God, it is sufficient to reply that this is not the alternative. Let the sinner cease to range wholly within the earthly sphere, forgetting that there is a God with whom nothing is impossible. Let him remember that the duty is his, while the power is from above; and the reconciliation between the two is in "the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time."

CHAPTER IX.

FIFTH OBJECTION TO PRAYER.

Leading to Fanaticism and Mysticism.

PRAYER is not only enjoined as a duty, it is accorded as a privilege. It is the soul's confidential intercourse with God, talking to him face to face, hearing his voice in the word, and responding to him in the fulness of its desires. Against this view of prayer the objection is preferred to the consideration of which this chapter is devoted; that *the claim to such personal and intimate communion with the Divine Being opens the door to the dreamiest Mysticism or to the wildest Fanaticism.*

The objection is superficial, like the hasty judgment of Eli against the pious Hannah, whose lips moved in the earnestness of her prayer, but emitted no sound. Thus "the strong crying and tears" of God's people are often construed as the maudlin utterances of persons besotted; and their justification must be couched in language similar to hers: "No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit, and I have poured out my soul before the Lord." In like manner the apostles on the day of Pentecost, speaking with tongues of fire in the streets of Jerusalem, were rashly accused of being "full of new wine," which Peter explains as the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy: "it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall

prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." It is not strange that humbler worshippers than these, in all the ages, should be visited with contempt and scorn as the victims of hallucination and deceit.

The shallowness of the charge will appear from the fact that it overlooks the important checks thrown around prayer, guarding against this result.

1. *All true prayer is bounded within the limits of God's sovereign will.* This is true in each of the three aspects in which prayer has been considered. If it be the expression of worship, this must be determined, both in its matter and in its method, by the word of God, or we are guilty of that will-worship so severely censured as itself a form of proximate idolatry. If, again, it be the acknowledgment of creaturely dependence, it is shut up to seek those blessings which are in accordance with the divine will. If, finally, it be the language of penitence and confession, it is only from the sacred record we can learn that forgiveness is possible, and on what terms it may be obtained. In every attempt at this duty we are remanded to the Scriptures, to find the limit of our desires and to know what we may boldly ask in agreement with God's declared will. Thus in the very substance and matter of our prayer we are shielded from the indulgence of a wild and prurient fancy.

The distinctive features of fanaticism is its claim to private revelations. The devotee fancies himself like Moses caught up into the cloud, as in the pavilion of the Most High, where the awful mysteries are disclosed to him alone. His extravagant conceits are to be re-

ceived in absolute faith by others, and there is no common or authoritative standard by which they can be verified. Fanaticism thus lifts itself, not only above criticism, but even above inquiry. It wraps itself in the mantle of dogmatism, and pronounces its anathema upon all who do not bow to its authority and worship at its shrine. On the other hand, there is no form of Christian experience which is not taken to the Scriptures to be tested: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Every opinion held, every doctrine embraced, every feeling indulged, all must be brought to an infallible and recognized tribunal. Nothing is of "private interpretation," for "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Here, then, is the first barrier against the ravings of the fanatic, or the dreams of the mystic, in the authority of the written word; to whose decision all human speculation must bend in loyal subjection. In assuming the attitude of prayer, entire submission is professed to that supreme will which has imposed the limit and the law of its desires.

2. *The self-examination required as to the spirit and temper of our prayers, forms another protection against fanaticism.* It has been already seen how prayer may be vitiated by unseemly dispositions which pervade them. The dictatorial spirit which robs the Deity of all liberty of action; the irreverent spirit which rushes hotly into his presence with feeble conception of his dreadful majesty; the impatient spirit which takes away the divine discretion in the bestowal of his bene-

fits; the unsubmissive spirit that rebels against the divine supremacy; the presumptuous spirit which will argue with Omniscience as if on terms of full equality; the selfish spirit that seeks its own advantage with no regard to God's glory; these and other violent defects disqualify the prayer and turn it into empty breath. He who sits on the mercy-seat to receive the true suppliant, finds no element of genuine worship in all that is uttered.

What scope then is there for fanatical or maudlin sentiment, when, before addressing himself to Jehovah, the worshipper must sit in judgment upon himself, must scan his most secret thoughts, must weigh his own heart in the scales of honest criticism, and thus with a true reverence prepare himself for audience with the Deity? Surely if anything can tone the spirit into caution and humility, it is the rigid introspection demanded in preparation for prayer.

3. *Prayer brings into exercise the full complement of all the faculties, and that too in their due and original subordination.* Two important facts are here signalized. If the whole intellectual and moral nature is brought out, its various and interdependent powers will qualify each other and the proper equilibrium will be preserved. And if the order disturbed by sin shall be restored by grace, additional security is afforded for the right action of the whole. No proof is needed that all the powers of the soul are exercised in prayer, beyond the simple enumeration of them in the several functions they fulfil. The understanding—how is it employed in apprehending the relations we sustain to Jehovah, and the various disclosures of himself in the

word! The judgment—how needful the scales in which it weighs the obligations under which we lie, and the value of the blessings for which we sue in prayer! The conscience—how constantly must it interpret for us the divine law, that we may embrace the right and shun the wrong! The affections—how they are stirred when God is seen in the loveliness of his being, the supreme object of worship and desire! The will—how indispensable its decisions in translating our thoughts and purposes into the acts which make up the history of human life! Can one of these fail to render its quota of service when man bows in worship before that God, whose dim, dark shadow he himself is?

Let it be remembered that the order in which these faculties originally stood has been disturbed by sin. The mind was intended to be the directing or leading power, going before with its headlight to explore the path to be trodden. What the reason approves as true the conscience endorses as right, and the affections embrace as good. When these faculties unite in their proper subordination, the will, as the executive faculty, carries through its determinations into the concrete act. Such is the order between them in the constitution which God, in the first instance, established. In man's fallen condition, however, temptation addresses itself to the fancy or taste, and the affections are first ensnared. Then the understanding is seduced by a special pleading, through which its perceptions are obscured; and finally the will is drawn into the foul conspiracy, as the blind agent to execute what is thus decreed. Life would present fewer

wrecks but for this sad inversion in the working of man's faculties. Were every suggestion offered first to the reason and the conscience, and their unbiased decision obtained before its submission to the affections of the heart, a bulwark would be raised behind which human virtue would be far more safe. As it is, man is drawn into evil through a fraud constantly practised upon his intelligence. He becomes the victim of a conspiracy in which reason is dethroned and conscience is paralyzed.

Perhaps no better illustration of this can be found than that furnished in the methods by which fanaticism accomplishes its designs. Its success depends upon this very inversion of our faculties, through which its insidious approach is made. Like the tempter of old, its entrance into the soul is gained through the appetites and passions, or through the imagination and taste. This bastion stormed and captured, reason is invoked to justify the surrender and to make the worse appear the better cause. The inner citadel gained, nothing remains but a blind submission to the conqueror's will. The disguise has been so complete as to hide the treachery of the assault without, and the betrayal of the traitors within. So far the victory is over the individual soul. The damage to society is wrought by a similar deceit through inversion of the duties to be performed. Like Aaron's rod, one duty is made to swallow up all the others; until society is taken to pieces at the joints, and falls into utter ruin and decay. In either case fanaticism would be shorn of its strength by the proper subordination of the human faculties, compelling it to pass

through the successive guards set for defence against the approach of evil.

This needful reädjustment is the work of infinite and sovereign grace. The Divine Spirit moves directly upon each power of the soul. The darkened mind is enlightened through the truth; the accusing conscience is sprinkled with the blood and purged of guilt; the estranged affections are won back to their ancient allegiance; the enslaved will is delivered from its bondage, and made free to serve the living God. The agency of the Spirit covers them all, and it is impossible to pronounce, from the testimony of the Scriptures, which engages the most of his attention. Man is to be saved as the rational and responsible being that he is; and in his entire translation into the kingdom of God the laws of his nature are duly respected, and every faculty is brought into play. The Spirit's work of illumination is put side by side with his work of renewal and sanctification. Indeed, except as mind and heart and will unite in their concurrent action, it is impossible that man shall "work out his salvation with fear and trembling." So far, then, is prayer from increasing the tendency to fanaticism, it is one of the surest defences against it. It brings man before God in the original symmetry of his nature, to use all his powers in their true relations to each other. In this condition of equipoise, he is preserved from the fury of every storm that may beat around him.

4. *A severe check is imposed upon fanaticism in that we approach God in prayer by an appointed way, and succeed in our petitions solely through the merit of another.* The posture of the worshipper is one of entire self-abasement. At the very gate of the temple he

must lay down his self-importance and pride. He is not worthy to enter by his own right; that right has been forfeited by transgression, and he is forever debarred, unless some mediator interpose through whom admission may be obtained. And when he shall kneel at the foot of the throne, there is no potency in his plea to bring a blessing on his soul. Covered with guilt and shame, he can only lie in the dust and plead again the name of the intercessor who has power to prevail with God. All this is in flat contradiction to the spirit and genius of fanaticism. Here is no self-righteous Pharisee challenging the divine attention upon the ground of his own merit, construing himself as the favorite to whom heavenly visions are afforded, and coming forth from his ectasy to look with pity or with scorn upon those whose privileges are not equal to his own.

Isaac Taylor, with the search of his analysis, represents malignity of temper as one of the concomitants of fanaticism; and he traces the logical connection between them. The high claim to mysterious correspondence with the Deity fills him with a haughty pride, who enjoys the exclusive privilege. The step is easy from this to contempt and scorn for all who are not invested with the same dignity. It only needs to regard these as the objects of the divine displeasure, to turn upon them the full tide of bigotry and religious hate. Thus by insensible degrees, the fanatic slips into the malignant, and bitterly derides—if he does not persecute—the victims of his scorn.

The two pictures are here side by side: the self-righteous Pharisee, who lapses through his pride into malignant abuse of all who do not wear his livery; and the

humble worshipper who leans upon the altar of Atonement as he prays for acceptance with God. The striking contrast between the two refutes the allegation that the office of prayer can conduce to the licentiousness of fanaticism.

5. *God guards his own supremacy in the answers to prayer, which is an important check to fanaticism.* He is entirely sovereign, whether to give or to withhold; and in this wide region of the contingent, we are obliged to depend simply upon "the good pleasure of his will." Even where his oath and covenant have given us a lien upon the blessings he has promised, his discretion is exercised as to the time and manner of their bestowal. The more he shall display his benevolence in the benefits conferred, the more is it necessary that we shall recognize and adore the grace from which they spring. A long delay may intervene between the prayer and its answer; serving the double purpose of testing our faith in his word, and of reminding us that he is sovereign and free in all his acts. The marvellous wisdom and power displayed in bringing the answer through the immense complications of his providence, fill life with continual surprises; and by the methods of their conveyance render the promised blessings as fresh and free as any which are indeterminate and contingent.

In this particular, then, true prayer offers protection against the invasions of fanaticism. In this steady dependence upon the divine promise and power, we cannot assume the high prerogatives and haughty bearing which are characteristic of the fanatic. A practical demonstration is thus afforded, that the weakest of all the objections urged against prayer is now disposed of forever.

CHAPTER X.

PRAYER: ITS PLACE IN A MORAL GOVERNMENT.

IN meeting the different objections raised against the doctrine and duty of prayer, the discussion has been forced into a negative form. It has been sufficient to face the opponent at his chosen points of attack, to parry the assault, and to turn the edge of every weapon he should employ. It is proper now to present the scriptural view of prayer, and to indicate in a more positive way the true place which it occupies in the moral government of God.

As already shown, all the arguments against the obligation of prayer proceed upon a total misconception of its office and design. If it is intended by us to inform God of what he does not know, or to move his sluggish goodness by appeals to his heart, or to induce an alteration of his plans by considerations addressed to his reason, then it is undeniably an affront, and all the attributes of his nature rise in indignant protest against the outrage we attempt. But the scriptural representation is precisely the reverse of this. It discloses the Divine Being in the relation of a father, who looks benignantly on the wants and woes of his children. It is true that sin has ruptured this sacred bond, bringing all mankind under his judicial displeasure, which would bar all access into his presence, and any distribution of his favors. But through the

dispensation of grace, now interposed, opportunity is afforded for repentance, a righteousness is provided by which the sinner may be justified, and a full salvation is offered to all who will accept it as the gift of love. Until this gracious economy shall be brought to its close, the righteous and the wicked are intermingled in life, and the common blessings of Providence are distributed indiscriminately to both. In the free exercise of his own benevolence, Jehovah forms the gracious purpose to confer his favors on the creatures of his hand, and ordains prayer as the prerequisite to their actual bestowal. To his spiritual children, who become such by faith in Christ Jesus, he sustains a closer relation. To such he becomes a father by adoption of them as sons and daughters, and making them "partakers of his holiness." He binds himself to be their God by express covenant, of which the promises are the sure guarantee. But to all as creatures, under this dispensation of mercy, the privilege of prayer is granted, and is bound upon them as a duty under the necessities of their being.

The scriptural principle is, not that favors are by our importunity wrung from the reluctance of the Divine Being, but that they antedate the prayer in the determinations of his sovereign and gracious will; and the true spirit of prayer, which he also imparts, is the sign and pledge of the gift to be conveyed. Prayer, then, as already stated, is not the cause which procures through its own efficiency, but merely the antecedent condition upon which a predetermined benefit is suspended. The purpose to give is, on Jehovah's part, sovereign and free; it is the spontaneous move-

ment of his own gracious and loving will. Yet, in the exercise of the same sovereignty and goodness, he interposes the prayer of the creature as the channel through which his favor shall descend.

A conspicuous illustration is furnished in Ezekiel xxxvi. 37, where God announces to the prophet weeping by the banks of the river Chebar, and through him to captive Israel, his fixed purpose to restore them to the land of their fathers. In glowing terms their future prosperity and joy are depicted, with all the privileges which should follow upon a sanctified use of their present sorrows. Yet it is added with solemn emphasis, "I will for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." How clear the matter stands! Jehovah, in the good pleasure of his will, has firmly resolved to bring back his captive people to the land which was theirs by inheritance from Abraham. It is announced as certain, without qualification or contingency. Yet this revealed purpose will work itself out through the prayer of Israel; which is announced with the same positiveness, as a means to the end, prescribed as the condition upon which the promised restoration shall be accomplished.

Nor is this an isolated case. Wherever in the Scriptures prayer is mentioned in connection with blessings obtained, it stands in just this relation to the sovereign purpose of Almighty goodness and power. Thus in Zechariah x. 6: "And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph; for I have mercy upon them, and they shall be as though I had not cast them off." Here is a free declaration of his purpose, founded

upon nothing save his own mercy. Then in immediate connection follows the statement that this purpose shall work its way through the co-ordinate agency of his people, in the prayers they shall address to him; "for I am the Lord their God, and I will hear them." Another testimony upon this point is furnished by the same prophet (Zech. xiii. 9), "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call upon my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God." The covenant relation of Israel to the Most High is plainly set forth in the last cited words, which assures the promise to their faith; yet it is only as "they shall call" and "he shall hear," that the promise is converted into a fact of history.

The classical passage, however, in regard to prayer, is to be found in Romans viii. 26, 27, where the agency of the Holy Spirit as the author of true prayer is fully expounded: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Not only must the Spirit teach us the things to pray for, and work in us the right desires for the same, but the efficiency of his assistance is made distinctly to turn upon his certain knowledge of the divine will or purpose in the case. The prayer indited by the Holy Ghost is sure of its answer; for "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth

what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." The connection is simply this: God, of his own will, proposes to bestow a special good; the Holy Spirit, knowing this purpose, produces in the heart of the believer the corresponding desire, which utters itself in all the vehemence of true prayer; and "He who searches the heart" of the suppliant, discovers his own purpose of grace reflected in the experience which has been wrought in the soul by the Spirit to that very end. He spontaneously willed to bestow, and the creature's desire has been brought into harmony with this, and upon this correspondence between the two—between the will of him who gives and the desire of him who receives—depends the effectualness of prayer. It is not required here to consider the whole body of doctrine wedged like a nugget of gold into this pregnant passage. This will come up hereafter in its appropriate place; but the testimony upon the topic now before us is too important to be pretermitted here. It affirms distinctly the sovereignty of God in all the blessings he confers, and the ground of that efficiency which resides in prayer as the channel of conveyance.

Under this view some find no other virtue in prayer than the reflex moral influence which it exerts on the worshipper himself. If God has already determined within himself to bestow a given boon, then prayer has no other office than to prepare the recipient for the enjoyment of it; its whole power is expended upon the suppliant, in simply bringing him into a receptive frame of heart. But if the opposite view of prayer as

counselling the Deity is insulting, this, which construes it as only influencing man, is inadequate. If prayer is nothing more than offering good advice to one's self, then it is mockery to address it to God. Those who engage earnestly in the duty cannot evade the conviction that it does in some way determine the result. It is a real pleading with God, and the mind is fixed upon him to whom the petitions are addressed. If the attention be withdrawn from him to consider what effect the exercise is to produce on ourselves, in that instant it ceases to be prayer and resolves itself into pious meditation. To address ourselves in earnest supplication to God with no other view than to alter the complexion of our own desires, is to render the whole service delusive and unreal. As soon as this unreality is disclosed to our apprehension, all benefit of every kind ceases; its influence, whether direct or reflective, is immediately destroyed. Of course, in saying this, it is not intended to deny the reflex influence of prayer upon him who offers it. On the contrary, the most important graces are exercised and the best affections of the heart are called forth, which will be abundantly shown in the next chapter. It is only affirmed here that in prayer we make a real approach to God, with the concentration of every thought upon him; and there is an invincible persuasion that the prayer—as directed to him and not to ourselves—has a direct influence upon the bestowal of the boon.

If, then, prayer does not inform nor persuade the Deity, but, on the contrary, founds on the idea that his will has already determined the matter in hand; if, again, our consciousness attests that in prayer we are

addressing considerations to him rather than to ourselves—what is the definite office of prayer? and what is the exact relation which it sustains to the divine purpose, not as *causa quâ*, but as *causa sine quâ non*—not as the efficient producer, but as the condition precedent? The answer is that, in the administration of a moral government over intelligent and responsible beings, it is indispensable that all their faculties shall be consciously exercised, and that the will of the creature shall be coördinated with that of the Creator in every event of providence and history. It is preposterous to assume that man is endowed with intelligence, affections, conscience and will, only that these powers should lie dormant in the soul. And it is equally absurd to suppose that these lofty attributes shall find their play only in the lower sphere where man deals with man. Their pre-eminent sphere is in the homage and service rendered to "the Father of our spirits," in whom we live and move. It is of the nature of mind to work outwardly from itself upon all objects presented before it, according to the laws which have been imposed for its guidance. As there is a realm of matter which is ruled under mechanical laws, so there is a realm of spirit ruled under the laws of spirit. There is a moral government which is administered through the reason and conscience of the subjects placed under its jurisdiction.

When, therefore, it is objected that prayer can have no place under a system of rigid law, the fallacy consists in assuming that there is no empire save that of matter, and no laws but such as are mechanical. But let the reign of law be extended through all the realms

of nature, and let this vast word comprehend the kingdom of the soul as well as of the body, then the laws of the soul are the laws that rule in this kingdom; and they are as universal and imperative, as inflexible and determinate, as those which physical science expounds in the domain of sense. Now the most fundamental law in this spiritual kingdom is that the will of the creature must be drawn forth on the human plane, just as articulately as the will of the Creator on the divine plane. These blend as the factors in the production of every event, just as surely as the multiplier and the multiplicand combine in the quotient. Destroy either of the two, and history becomes a blank: it is no longer the record of human actions, nor of a divine government over the same. We may not be able to penetrate the mystery which enshrouds the union of the two, nor to measure the angle of intersection between these distinct planes of the human and divine agency. But the great truth stands out under the attestation of consciousness, that God governs man through his thought, conscience, and will. If sin has disabled these powers, rendering us impotent in our ruin, his infinite grace provides the needed relief. Divine power restores and quickens our shattered nature; but the entire process is in strict conformity with the laws of our spiritual economy. Light is poured into the understanding, and darkness is removed; conscience is purged from a sense of guilt by the blood of sprinkling, and ceases to accuse; the affections are renewed, so that they flow generously to God under the attraction of his holiness; the enslaved will is emancipated from the bondage of sin, and by its own polarity

turns upon its pivot to the obedience of the truth. The entire change is wrought by a power from without; but in the very transformation and at every stage of its progress, and in every spiritual affection of his subsequent career, the Christian recognizes every thought and desire as his own, and feels his responsibility in reference to each. Under a full conviction of his individual accountability, he "works out his own salvation with fear and trembling"—knowing at the same time that "it is God who worketh in him to will and to do of his good pleasure." Nor is he conscious of the least jar arising from the collision between the two agencies, both of which are equally necessary in their respective spheres. Just here, then, the office of prayer is found. It is not intended to move the spontaneous benevolence, nor to abridge the unlimited supremacy of Jehovah. Nor, on the other hand, is it merely designed reflectively to prepare us for the reception of a sovereign gift. It is ordained under a moral system that the creature's will may freely place itself upon the will of the Creator, and avow its coalescence with the same. It enters as an integer into the final result; and the whole moral nature of man is thus recognized in the sphere of grace, as in that of law.

Against this exposition it may, however, be urged that God often bestows his largest earthly favors upon those who restrain prayer before him. Hence the inference is deduced that, in the exercise of his own sovereignty, he may dispense with prayer as the condition on which his blessings are conferred. To this the answer is fourfold:

First, The question now under discussion is not what God may choose to do in his absolute and unchallenged sovereignty, but what is the method adopted by him as the Father of his children, for the transmission of his favors. In this last he is not barred the exercise of any of his inherent and reserved prerogatives.

Second, He may see fit by these benefactions to the wicked to emphasize, and to render more conspicuous, the discipline through which his people are prepared for better expectations beyond the grave.

Third, In these benefits conferred upon the wicked, seemingly without prayer, it may be found that in some way he has secured their intelligent coöperation, and has blended their will with his own as a joint factor in the product. When, for example, the irreligious farmer prepares the soil and sows the grain, his well-directed and thoughtful industry may be construed as a natural prayer, founded on the faith of the original promise that "seed-time and harvest shall not cease while the earth remaineth." Though only constructively a prayer, yet so far as it builds upon his promise, God may choose, in the largeness of his discretion, to accept it as rendered in action, although suppressed in speech.

Fourth, When the career of such shall be accomplished, and its issues are disclosed in the light of eternity, it may appear that this temporal prosperity was really their bitterest curse. The judgments of men on earth will undergo a sad reversal hereafter, as that which is seen under the light of the stars wears a different aspect under the blaze of the sun. Alas! how many in eternity will bewail that fortune on earth

by which their hearts were seduced from the service of God! They will come to feel the truth of Solomon's testimony, "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them." It will be a fearful disclosure of the hidden curse which lay in the folds of their earthly success, when it shall be said to them, as to the rich man in the parable, "Son, remember, that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazaraus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

The real blessings, then, which descend upon us through the intervention of prayer, are the sovereign gifts of God, having their source alone in his infinite goodness. God freely resolves to give, and then provides through prayer for the exercise of the creature's intelligent agency, which, not as a producing cause, but as a prescribed condition, exerts a concurrent influence in securing the benefits conferred. In this simple and just relation of prayer to the moral government of God, all the objections urged against it are overruled, and finally estopped.

CHAPTER XI.

REFLEX BENEFITS OF PRAYER.

THE promise made in the preceding chapter must now be redeemed, setting forth the retro-action of prayer on the worshipper himself. Having discarded the theory that this subjective influence exhausts the significance of prayer, it becomes the more necessary to emphasize its disciplinary value in the formation and development of christian character.

1. The reflex influence of prayer may be clearly traced in *deepening the channel of our religious nature.* It is the moral and religious element which draws the final distinction between man and the brute. The endowment of reason is indeed very properly assigned as man's chief characteristic; the term being employed in its largest extension as the thinking faculty through which we ascertain truth, passing from the known to the unknown by conclusions intelligently deduced, and by which we contrive new adjustments to accomplish newly proposed ends. All this is immeasurably beyond the purpose of the brute, which is limited to a single object, is never spontaneous, and is mechanical rather than intelligent in its operation. Nevertheless, the highest forms of instinct seem so to approach the lowest processes of reason that we are compelled to speak of the mind of the brute. Certain natural affections also are exhibited, such as love for their off-

spring, fear of impending evil, resentment of injuries, seeming appreciation of kindness, and the like, almost akin with corresponding sentiments of the human heart. The range may be as narrow in this emotional sphere as in the intellectual, extending possibly little, if at all, beyond the instincts necessary for their own protection and the propagation of their kind. The resemblance, however, in all this to human reason and sentiment forbids our drawing here the exclusive separation between the two. We seek for another ground of discrimination in which no such resemblance, not even the faintest, obtains. It so happens that in all the conduct of the brute no trace can be discovered of the operation of conscience. There is with them no sense of obligation, and no response to the call of duty. With assiduous care we may train the most sluggish of them to certain courses of action; but it is mainly an automatic service, which we compel by associations established in their memory with definite pains and penalties. It is not compliance with any rule of duty, but much more like the movement of a delicate and complex machine, whose hidden springs are controlled by an external agency. It does not occur to us that they *ought* to do this or that through their own free will; and when perverse and obstinate, though we proceed to refresh their memory of the forgotten discipline by which subjection is secured, we do not attach the censure of violated obligation. Incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong, they cannot be educated in any school of virtue, nor can they be charged with vices, to be visited with legal retribution.

Here, then, is the indisputable and ineffaceable distinction between man and the beast of the field: The latter is "of the earth, earthy," and "his spirit goeth downward," where it belongeth. The former is made "in the image of his Maker," "endued with sanctity of reason," and with those lofty powers of conscience, heart, and will, which lift him into fellowship with God, and render him capable of endless progress in knowledge and blessedness. If, then, man is unalterably discriminated from the creatures below him, by the possession of a moral and religious nature, it is in this sphere he is to find his highest dignity and worth. Preëminent as he may be in the gift of reason, this is not his grandest distinction so long as the instinct of the brute treads, however remotely, upon the border of intelligence. In the realm of duty and of worship he moves alone. In the gradation of his powers, therefore, the intellectual must yield precedence to the spiritual, except in so far as knowledge is subordinated to worship.

The influence of true prayer can now be estimated in deepening the channel of this religious nature in man. The essence of religion consists in the recognition of a personal God, and of the personal relations in which we stand to him, and of the duties which spring out of the same. In his supreme jurisdiction his will is to be obeyed, and the act of every intelligent creature is to be performed to the glory of his name. Now, prayer lifts the soul into the immediate presence of this august Being, to feel the power and bear the imprint of all the divine perfections, singly and combined. We bow before the majesty of his

supremacy with awe; before his consummate holiness with adoring reverence; before his inviolable justice with mingled fear and trust; before his compassion and grace with confiding gratitude and love. The entire spirit is toned by the worship which is rendered. It bears us above the world of matter, and dispels the illusion that only what is cognizable by the senses is of practical value. It transfigures the world of mind, by elevating thought into devotion. These repeated acts crystallize into permanent habits, and the spiritual within us gains the ascendency over the appetites of the flesh. The religious sensibilities are quickened, and holy affections flow with a swifter current to him on whom they terminate. The religious nature deepens in its channel, just as the rivers by their friction wear the beds on which they sweep with increasing volume into the open sea.

2. The influence of prayer is conspicuously manifested in *the truthfulness which is imparted to character*. It is scarcely necessary to say that truth is the foundation on which all human intercourse is based. Not a single relation can be formed without preëxisting confidence between the parties; no transaction of business can be initiated without trust in the fidelity of those whose promise is given; for what we denominate rectitude is but truth in action—truth which takes the form of veracity in speech, and of integrity in conduct; truth guiding the tongue and actuating the life. In this broad sense truth becomes the cement which holds society together. Destroy this single bond, and the whole fabric tumbles into ruin. So indispensable is it to every earthly interest that bars and

bolts and prisons are interposed to enforce its observance, in the punishment of defamation and slander as well as of imposture and fraud. Upon no single point is personal honor so sensitive as the imputation of falsehood, and no insult is so quickly resented. Indeed, truthfulness lies so confessedly at the bottom of what we call character, that we anticipate the total and speedy wreck of those in whom it is wanting. In all these directions do men evince the value which they put upon truth in the intercourse of society and in the conduct of business.

Will it be believed now that the truth, so scrupulously maintained towards men, should be almost universally disregarded towards God? Painful as is the indictment, it must be entered against all who "cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God." Men who would not knowingly violate a single obligation to their fellows say practically by their lives, "Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him, or what profit should we have if we pray unto him?" It is this life of prayerlessness which we charge as a continuous falsehood; the more emphatic because deliberate, and enacted in the sphere where truth is most imperatively required. The fact which is furthest from dispute is the creature's entire dependence upon the Creator. Even the life itself is given—measured by the beating pulse, like a clock marking the succession of fleeting moments in which that life is renewed. The light which floods a hemisphere shines only as a created sun "rejoices as a strong man to run his race." The air, with its balmy breath, enters the prison of the body, and turns the wheels of its complex machinery on their

noiseless axle. The obedient earth, under a divine decree, draws from her teeming bosom the fruits which nourish our fainting frame. And above all these, a thousand tender affections spring up in our social life to refresh the soul with their perfume and their bloom. We cannot cover with our eye a spot in our career, without tracing the shadow of a gracious and watchful providence thrown upon our path.

What untruth can be more pronounced than for a being thus dependent to act as though possessing all resources within himself? This the prayerless man habitually does. He rises in the morning, without so much as a thought directed to him by whose power he has been preserved through the hours of unconscious slumber. He satisfies the craving of hunger, with as little sensibility as the ox that grazes upon the green pastures of earth. He revels amid the joys of domestic love, without any acknowledgment of the happiness upon which the soul has fed. Year treads upon the heel of year through, perhaps, a long and prosperous life, without a single expression of grateful dependence upon the Being by whose bounty he has been sustained. How frightfully untruthful such a career appears, when, in every breath that is drawn, in every step that is taken, in every plan that is executed, man passes the delusion on himself of independence which never existed, and the whole life becomes an acted falsehood before God!

The corrective for this is to be sought in the spirit of true and earnest prayer. It is the language of creatureship, and founds upon the sense of insufficiency and want. The soul goes with its burden of sorrow or

of sin, of anxiety or of fear, and lays it down at the foot of the Creator's throne; and then waits with the patience of hope for the deliverance which shall be brought in God's own time and way. When the petitions shall have been fully answered, the grateful spirit returns with the acknowledgment of his mercies, and the mouth is filled with thanksgiving and with praise. The attitude of the creature is now seen to be truthful, because it expresses the just relation in which he stands to "the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift." As long as this spirit of prayer is maintained, the creature cannot break from his orbit like a star lost in the abysses of space, but is held to his duty in all his relations, both to God and to man. Nor should it be overlooked, that in the confessions of unworthiness and sin made at the throne of grace, rare ingenuousness and magnanimity of soul is cultivated which can acknowledge a wrong and a fault; and what this high virtue is worth in such a world as ours can only be measured by the griefs it heals and the broken friendships it restores.

3. *Prayer makes direct issue with all sin, and conforms as far as possible to a perfect standard of rectitude.* The unity subsisting between our vices renders this practicable by striking at the root from which they spring. In proportion as this decays, the fruits depending from the branch are seen to wither. As all obedience resolves into the principle of love, so all transgression into the selfishness of a heart estranged from the living God. No sooner are the affections weaned from the supreme Being, than they concentrate upon self under the myriad forms in which its gratifi-

cation may be sought. In prayer, however, the supremacy of this usurper is disowned. Its first utterances are "*thy* name be hallowed," "*thy* kingdom come," "*thy* will be done." In the confession of the sinner, there is the acknowledgment of guilt; in the petition of the creature, there is the acknowledgment of emptiness and want; in the supplication of the penitent, is deplored the penalty of a violated law; in the voice of thanksgiving and praise, is the recognition of sovereign benefits bestowed. The very form of the prayer, no less than its spirit, lays the worshipper in the dust before God, and brings the recalcitrant will back to its old and proper subjection under the will which is supreme.

In this connection it is well worthy of notice that, while prayer breaks down the selfishness of the human heart, it brings more distinctly into view our real self-hood. As individuals we appear before the mercy-seat, clothed with our personal responsibilities, under the pressure of our individual sorrows and cares, with the full conviction of our personal follies and sins, and with the inextinguishable consciousness that the will which we submit to the governance and authority of the Almighty is our own will—as truly our own will in the submission and obedience, as before in the contumacy and rebellion. How else could confession be made or pardon be received, if the sins acknowledged were not felt to be our own? And how could the soul cry in the rapture of a true fellowship, "My Lord and my God," but for the personal relation expressed in this appropriating pronoun? Yet it is in the assertion of this very self-hood that its egotism and self-esteem are

completely sacrificed upon the altar of prayer. The cupidity which grovels in the acquisition of riches, the pride which betrays itself in quick resentments and is always suspicious of insult, the malignity which deepens into murder and revenge—all these, with the lusts of the flesh and the more hidden sins of the heart, all languish to their final extinction under the influence of prayer. With the decay of these carnal vices, is the corresponding development of the christian graces. An exhaustive enumeration of these cannot be made without undue expansion. In the way of illustration, let only one or two be noted:

There is, first of all, the heroic virtue of faith, which qualifies every act of true greatness on earth. No historic deed is ever wrought except by those who rise above the present, lifting the horizon which opens the widening landscape into the unseen and distant future. By the instinct of faith alone are we detached from the immediate present, and project ourselves into what is beyond—drawing up that future with magnetic force until it is abreast of us, and living in it as the time for which we are born. Thus it is, men do the things which cannot be done and become the makers of history. But how much grander the faith which bears the Christian over the abyss into the stretches of the vast eternity beyond! The faith, which is "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen," sows the seeds of immortal joy in the perishing moment of to-day; and the life that never dies is lived in this which here vanishes with a breath. What, then, shall nourish in the soul this principle of faith, if not prayer, which pleads the promises of divine covenant before the eternal throne?

And then humility, the lowly virtue that droops in such graceful folds around the form of him who is only a creature. Even the bird with extended wing, about to launch upon the sea of air, stoops to gather its strength for the adventurous plunge; and the leopard of the jungle crouches to the earth for a more vigorous spring upon its prey. Just so the soul, the lower it bows in humility before God, the loftier will be its aspirations and the more glorious its ascension. There is true philosophy in the scriptural aphorism, "before honor is humility." It has been perhaps wisely said, that the empires of antiquity perished because they were founded upon the fallacy of human perfectibility; and that no government can endure which does not recognize the inherent weakness of a sinful race, thus making provision, through the elasticity of its administration, for the working of human corruption and error. It is equally necessary to individual success that our faculties be weighed in equal scales, and the limits be ascertained beyond which they will not reach. Thus shall we be kept from an idle flapping of the wings only to beat the air, as well as from dashing the breast like a caged eagle against the bars of our prison. How much more precious is the humility which prayer deepens in the heart of the believer—the humility which accepts God's valuation of him, as the estimate he would form of himself! It is the humility of the seraphim as they veil their faces before the Majesty above; while it is the humility of "the woman that was a sinner," who washed the Master's feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. It is the humility of the Publican crying in the temple, "God

be merciful to me a sinner:" and then with sublime patience waits through long delays upon him with whom "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." It is the humility whose face is bathed with penitent sorrow for sin, and then shines with the splendor of the divine forgiveness and favor.

Without detaining the reader upon other graces of the Christian, such as patience, hope, courage, and the like, it will suffice to show that in seeking the extirpation of sin and the cultivation of virtue, prayer conforms the character more and more to a fixed standard of righteousness. It is simple mockery to confess sin and implore forgiveness, if there is no purpose to abandon sin. It is nothing less than perjury to bewail sin in the presence of infinite justice, while yet "wickedness is sweet in the mouth and is hidden under the tongue." No; the prayer for pardon is strictly a prayer for holiness—the pledge given of an earnest struggle against the bondage of sin. It may be indeed that, through the force of temptation and the power of long-indulged habit, the petitioner shall fall once and again into the faults which have been bewailed; yet at the time of confession it was sincerely made, and the resolution was definitely formed never more in this way to transgress. The lapse into the "easily besetting sin" occurred through the weakness of the flesh; the anguish it occasions is uttered in the strong language of the apostle, "Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The conflict is resumed in the cry, "When I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be my light." In this troubled life, so full of temptation

and trial, who can estimate the advantage in fixing the mind upon a high ideal, and strengthening the purpose of more complete conformity with a perfect standard? In definitely committing us to this, one of the reflex benefits of prayer is clearly shown.

4. The influence of prayer is felt in *strengthening the bond of human brotherhood*. We have seen that intercession is one of its essential parts. In the great model set by our Lord before his disciples, the first words are, "Our Father." We come to the mercy-seat in the furniture of all our earthly relations and clothed in the vesture of our natural affections. At the throne of grace, if anywhere, we are stripped of selfishness. The burden upon our hearts is the burden resting upon those with whom we are bound up in life. The parent, in his closet, bears the hopes and the fears of all his household. The merchant, under the weight of his own perplexities and cares, carries along all who are associated with him in the interlacings and complications of business. It is not merely a natural sympathy that impels to this, but the necessities of his own case cannot be uncovered before God without including those in whose welfare his own has become entangled. Above all, that large charity which a gracious Providence has dispensed to him must be reflected from him to others. Thus the secret worship offered to him who "heareth in secret" tightens the bond of brotherhood with every soul of man upon the earth. How can we pray for the pardon of our sin without imploring the same forgiveness for all who need it? And how can we render thanks for mercies received without desiring that those we love should be

partakers of the same joy? Partly in this way may Christians fulfil their spiritual priesthood—bearing upon their bosom the joys and sorrows of their fellow-men, in faint copy of the great High Priest, who writes on the stones of his breast-plate the names of all his saints. The effect of this in harmonizing the discords of earth is none the less real, because it works in secret and without observation. No man who has left a prayer for his neighbor with the great Father, can harbor a resentful thought or go forth to deeds of unkindness and injury. If all men were given to prayer, contentions and strife would disappear, and this earth would resemble the paradise it was at the beginning.

5. *Prayer fits us for the practical duties of life, and weaves us intelligently into the divine plans.* We are led to the exercise of prayer either in the way of spontaneous homage, or by the pressure of our necessities. In either case, it becomes an effective discipline for the discharge of every duty. In the first, the magnetic virtue which goes forth from a strong nature, giving tone to that which is weaker, is felt in its highest degree: and we return from the exalted fellowship girded with almost supernatural strength for the battle of life. In the second, we obtain the special counsel which relieves our perplexity and the timely aid which delivers us from peril.

The very impulse to prayer must be preceded by a thoughtful measurement of the duty to be performed, which of itself is no small preparation for the same. The simple petition for guidance and help fastens the obligation more firmly on the conscience, and pledges us to the full exertion of our own powers. The ac-

knowledgment of weakness implied in prayer, prevents any waste of strength in useless and misdirected efforts: whilst the expectation of assistance from above gives the courage to undertake, and the patience to continue, whatever an enlightened judgment shall dictate. The graces and virtues, moreover, which we have already considered, bring us into harmonious co-operation with every subsidiary agency around us. All these enter as elements of success in fulfilling the responsibilities fairly imposed upon us, and for which we are largely indebted to the secret influence of prayer upon our own character and life.

The transition is easy to consider the same influence in blending our intelligent agency with that of an ordaining Providence in accomplishing its purposes. All creatures, indeed, rational and irrational, are instruments used to fulfil the divine counsels. The spider in Scottish story, that renewed hope in the heart of the desponding Bruce by knitting its thread to the ceiling after nine successive failures, wrought itself blindly into the history of a brave people, and became a factor in securing to them national independence. So with us, whether as cyphers or as integers, whether as decimals or as multiples, we have our place in the arithmetic of heaven, and figure in the final computation when the product is attained. But the praying soul is not content with an unconscious agency of this sort. It seeks to know the divine will from the page on which it is recorded, or else to discover it through the unfolding of Providence. It seeks for opportunities of intelligent coöperation with the august Being with whom it is in daily communion,

uniting with him in the execution of his majestic plans. Thus does prayer enter into the sphere of our activity, and direct our conscious agency in the discharge of every recognized obligation.

6. It must be evident to the reader that this analysis of an inexhaustible theme must be arrested at some point. He should, therefore, be content with one illustration more of the retro-active influence of prayer, *in lifting Christian experience above its fluctuating frames and rendering it constant and equable.* The tendency is universal, until corrected by grace, to make our present frame of feeling the test and measure of our Christian state. In a thousand cases against one, in the early stages of experience, a pleasant or comfortable feeling is complacently assumed as the sure index of spiritual health; while a dark and desponding frame is made the ground of most bitter self-accusing. Yet no test is so uncertain in its application, or so unreliable in its result, as the changing emotions of the hour. A very little reflection should suffice to expose the delusion. Natural temperament, as sanguine or phlegmatic, affects the complexion of our feelings, almost as the pigment which gives color to the skin. The conditions of sickness or of health, from the mysterious connection of soul and body, will largely control our spiritual exercises. The heart is depressed or exalted under the dispensations of Providence, as we find ourselves in affliction or in the enjoyment of special mercies. Finally, in addition to these causes of variation in constant operation, there is the inevitable reaction in the emotions themselves. The wear and tear of strong excitement, if continuous, would destroy

life. The sword will cut through the scabbard if too frequently drawn. God has constituted the emotions like the tides of the sea—now rising to their flood, then ebbing back to the bosom of the deep; or, to employ another analogy, in the reaction which invariably follows unusual excitement, nature provides a repose to the spirit akin to that which sleep affords to the body. But too often the delicate duty of self-inspection is attempted just at the moment of mental exhaustion, when the spiritual force is spent and is wholly incapable of the effort to which it is unjustly summoned. Is it strange, after a continued and unnatural strain upon the delicate nervous organization, that a condition of spiritual insomnia is reached, which is as truly a mental disease as that which under the same name so often afflicts the body?

Religion is as clearly a matter of principle as of sentiment; and the feeling which does not find its root in solid convictions is like the foam of the sea, proof of its agitation, but not of its strength. The Christian who looks only to his changing moods for the evidence of spiritual soundness, will always be in bondage, until a large experience shall enable him to distinguish the emotion, which is the bloom of Christian character, from the transient feeling occasioned by some accidental and foreign influence. It will be helpful to recognize that the blossom must soon perish from its stem, while the plant is resting in its inner life to bring forth the fruit that shall remain. Just here the value of prayer is disclosed. It lifts the soul above the dull atmosphere of earth, to breathe the purer air of heaven. It tones the spirit by intimate

fellowship with him who is "the Father of our spirits." It calls for the exercise of faith when not a ray of comfort breaks through the midnight gloom, and support is found alone in the promises of the covenant. It cultivates the habits of faith, patience and hope, until these grow into the fixed posture of the soul; which escapes from the torturing inquisition of changing tempers by taking refuge at once and always under the wings of the Almighty. The sweetness of this liberty is known only to those long tossed between doubt and despair, who find rest at last in the oath and strength of Jehovah.

While, therefore, these incidental results accrue from the exercise of prayer, we are left free to appreciate its higher significance in its relation to the whole moral government of God.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DIGNITY OF PRAYER.

THIS topic, though implicated in all that has gone before, needs to be formally presented; not only to round out the discussion of these more general aspects of prayer, but especially to meet the contempt and ridicule poured upon it by the thoughtless and profane. In the objections against the doctrine of prayer which have been already considered, the assault is at least serious and respectful. The attempt to overthrow this duty by solid argument is a confession of its substantial importance. No one would put himself to the trouble of constructing a laborious argument against a practice, unless persuaded of its firm hold upon the conscience and heart. We can, therefore, enter into the discussion of these without feelings of resentment, which are justly aroused by flippant jeers against the Christian in his secret devotions, as the victim of a degrading superstition; or by denunciation of the modest praying circle as a conventicle of foolish fanatics vainly bolstering an absurd and obsolete faith.

"Behold, he prayeth," was the language in which our ascended Lord quieted the fears and reassured the confidence of Ananias when sent on a mission of comfort to the stricken and penitent persecutor of the early church. But, introduced with an exclamation of astonishment and wonder, it conveys a deeper

meaning from the lips by which it was uttered. It was a plain intimation that the pharisaic ritualist, who from his youth had mumbled the words of a cold, ceremonial worship, had never till this moment truly known what it is to pray. In this secret act of penitential submission he rises, for the first time, to the highest dignity of worship. It is upon this aspect of prayer, in the divine estimate put upon it, that the reader is now solicited to fix his attention. Wherein, then, consists the nobleness of this act of the human soul? From the etymology of the word, we know in what true dignity consists: It is that worthiness of character and carriage which befits the station we occupy, and which entitles us to the admiration and esteem of others. It is only necessary, then, to inquire whether the homage which man renders to God in prayer is not an act of pefect decency, worthy of the nature with which he is endowed, and of the trusts with which he is invested. The following points will determine this issue:

1. *Prayer is an act of worship, in which all the constituent elements of our complex being are distinctly united and exercised.* It was found necessary, in a preceding chapter, to vindicate prayer from the charge of fanaticism, by showing that the latter disjoins and inverts the faculties of the soul, whilst the former combines them all in their original and proper subordination. This distinguishing fact must be reproduced here, with some extension of its scope and emphasis. Is prayer an exercise below the dignity of such a being as man? On the contrary, he acts most worthily of himself when he brings into harmonious development his entire being, both of body and of soul.

What was Saul of Tarsus doing when it was said of him, "Behold he prays?" Like the prodigal son in our Lord's parable, he had "come to himself," and he sat down to think. Just as David testifies (Psalm cxix. 59), "I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." Ah! how much is covered by that word—thought! Nothing less than the whole section of our nature, which we designate as the intellect, including all the powers of memory and reflection, of judgment and the reason. Before a man can lisp a syllable of prayer, he must recognize something to pray for. He must know to whom the prayer shall be addressed, and he must consider the relations in which he stands to the Benefactor whose favor he solicits. He must learn the way of approach into that awful and unseen presence. He must study the grounds upon which the appeal shall be based, and the limit beyond which it may not be lawfully urged. If the prayer is to be aught beyond a vain incantation counted upon the beads of a rosary, it is a vigorous exercise of the understanding, in which the suppliant ranges over the entire realm of thought. He analyzes his own character, construes his own history, anticipates his own destiny. He searches into all that may be known of the august Being before whom he bows with awe. By every resource of persuasion and argument he seeks to propitiate the power which he cannot successfully oppose; and in the force of his pleading he expends the entire wealth of his intelligence and thought.

The mind is not the only power which prayer calls into exercise; the conscience yields also its contingent in its response to the authority of the law. It is

in the act of prayer this faculty most clearly asserts its supremacy. It brings man face to face with his obligations, both human and divine; keeps the tally as to his faithfulness in their discharge; fastens upon him the sense of blame or of approval; and standing at the gate, seems to open or to shut his approach to the throne of the great King. The moral side of man's nature finds its expression in the distinction between the right and the wrong, precisely as the intellectual had done in its discrimination between the true and the false. Bending before the majesty of law, the soul gives its echo to the demands of justice as distinctly as to the claims of truth.

The sensibilities also are quickened, and the taste is aroused which discerns between the beautiful in morals and the deformed. The desire goes forth towards the good, and disgust recoils from the evil and the base; while the heart lavishes its love upon the one, and pours its hatred on the other. A third department of our nature falls thus into line with the two preceding. Along with the intellect which puts us into possession of knowledge, and the conscience which brings us under subjection to law, is united the heart which entwines its affections around both and blends them into unity.

Only one reserved power is required to draw man out from the region of feeling into that of action. The will with its determinations, under the guidance of reason, the direction of conscience and the impulse of affection and desire, comes now to the front and developes the whole into energy. Man cannot remain in a state of contemplation, nor be absorbed in the regis-

tering of judicial opinions, nor burn in the flame of his own emotions. Through the executive agency of the will these crystallize eventually in the concrete external actions which make the record of human life. It is in prayer this coördination of the faculties is most conspicuous, because they are all essential in the performance of the duty.

The dignity of prayer is not fully represented even in this assemblage of spiritual qualities. Man is not exclusively spiritual, but corporeal as well. A body is fashioned in which the spirit is enshrined; and this body is wonderfully fitted to all the uses of its mysterious tenant. It is not only the abode in which the spirit finds its home, but it is the organ through which it executes all its purposes. Through the five senses, as through five open avenues, to appropriate Isaac Taylor's beautiful thought, the soul walks forth and takes possession of a world foreign to itself. These outward impressions the mind conveys into its own laboratory, and by reflection transmutes into the knowledge which divine wisdom had, from the beginning, stored for him in the very frame of the earth. Nor is it less noteworthy that by means of the body the mind is released from its own seclusion; and by social touch with other minds, increases its power and multiplies its joy a thousandfold. By natural sounds which speak to the ear, by conventional signs addressed to the eye, by the varying gestures and postures of the body itself —still more by the endless play of expression of the countenance, that dial-plate of the soul—man holds fellowship with man, and the marvels of civilization and society are wrought. When, therefore, in prayer

the attitude of reverence is instinctively assumed, it is the concurrence of the body in the homage which is rendered by the soul. No constituent element of man's complex being is withheld in this supreme act, in which every faculty of soul and body is embarked. Is it possible for man to be more worthy of himself, than when he blends all the parts of his nature in this perfect unity? What dignity can be greater than of standing thus, in the equipage of all his powers, to engage in the highest service to which the creature can be summoned? But this leads directly to the ground of vindication which follows:

2. *In prayer man holds personal communion with the infinite Jehovah.* It is a familiar saying, that "a man is known by the company he keeps." Not only are his tastes and pursuits thereby disclosed, but the station he must occupy and the eminence which he may hope to attain. If his place be among the nobles of the land, he requires the dignity which belongs to them. Thus Solomon says, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise"; and again, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men." Job sets forth the reward of the righteous, that "with kings are they on the throne." If, then, the favorite of an earthly monarch shares in the credit of royalty, what honor shall be assigned to him who is in daily intercourse with the "King of kings and Lord of lords"? This is the argument in a nutshell: Prayer cannot be a small and cheap affair, inviting the scorn and ridicule of foolish witlings, if it be the soul's fellowship with him who is supreme in majesty and dominion.

This conclusion, drawn from the mere existence of such intercourse, will be strengthened by considering its special features. For example, it is strictly personal, between the individual soul and the Lord its maker. Of course in the closet, where the door is shut and the prayer is in secret, the worshipper is alone with God. There is no presence there save of the Invisible, revealed to the eye and touch of faith. But it is equally true in the great assembly, where a thousand voices swell the song of praise, and a thousand hearts beat responsive to the public prayer. Both in the supplication and the song each spirit wings its separate flight upwards to the King. Its experience is its own, though mingled with the rest; and the harmony of the united worship is the blending of separate chords in single and individual hearts. It is the glory of this divine fellowship to be thus close and personal where nothing can intervene to widen and to weaken the holy friendship.

Again, a communion so secret must needs be confiding. Reserve, on either side, seems wholly abandoned. Sins which shame will not entrust to the dearest earthly friend, are freely confessed to him whose love is equal to all forgiveness. The shame of conscious guilt may be too deep to fall upon the ear of the penitent himself; and then the dread secret is poured into the ear of infinite pity by "the groaning which cannot be uttered." The sorrows too weighty to be borne upon human speech, are floated upon sighs and tears to him who can subdue them all with his tender caress. So, on the other hand, "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show

them his covenant" (Psalm xxv. 14). What this means cannot be fully known, until the saints shall mingle their histories in "the new song" of the upper temple. What serene peace floods the heart in moments of penitence, when infinite grace whispers the assurance of perfect forgiveness! What flashes of joy sometimes come into the soul when, like Moses, it "goes up into the thick darkness where God is!" Only this can be uttered as a part of our earthly testimony, that when "deep calleth unto deep, and the waves and the billows are gone over us, then the Lord doth command his loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song has been with us." It will be for a later stage in this discussion to set forth the wonderful provision he has made through his indwelling Spirit for such revelations of himself to the believing soul. At present we are only in the outer court, and may not anticipate what remains to be disclosed behind the veil, in the inner sanctuary of this vast theme.

Above all, it is characteristic of this intercourse that it is held with God in all the attributes of his infinite nature. Spirit must touch spirit in what either may contain; and so the human soul draws into itself all it may from the fulness which is in God. In its ignorance it may draw upon the wisdom that is infinite; in its weakness, upon the strength that is boundless; in its impurity, upon the holiness that is absolute; in its sorrow, upon the bliss that is supreme. Sweeping around the entire circle of human wants and desires, we touch the corresponding spring in the divine fulness from which the supply must flow. Thus, while the

ages unfold through eternal cycles, the soul of man, through this fellowship, shall fill its own emptiness from the exhaustless fountain at which it shall drink forever. Who can say that man's dignity is lowered by such correspondence with the Being who is consummate in excellence?

3. *In prayer we are led to make a proper estimate of time and eternity.* The truth is forced upon us, that we are fashioned by a higher power, through whose providence we are sustained, under whose government we live, and by whose will we are controlled. By necessary association of thought, two worlds, the seen and the unseen, are brought together, and the relations between them begin to be recognized. It is more or less distinctly felt that the issues of the present life are to be sought and found in the life to come; that our career on earth is purely disciplinary and educational, during which fixed habits are formed, and character grows into the final crystal which shall abide unchanged forever. In proportion as the prayer is truthful and not the offspring of blind superstition, it strengthens in the soul that sense of responsibility which no being under law can ignore; and the life here finds that it must be adjusted to the life hereafter. If the worth of any created thing is that it fulfils the purpose for which it was designed, then is not the nobleness of the man disclosed who perceives the scope of his entire being, and provides for the destiny which he must shortly overtake? As the eagle, whose fierce eye does not quail before the face of the sun, is nobler than the bat, which circles only in the darkness; so is the soul which can measure the stretches of the end-

less future, grander than that of the blind mole who burrows only in the near and fleeting present. There is true sublimity in the attitude of one who, on the crumbling edge of the passing moment, feels after God in trustful prayer, and "hides in the secret of his presence." The majesty of prayer consists in its lifting man up to the throne of "the King eternal, immortal, invisible," giving him escape from the vanishing shows of earth into the blessedness of the endless life above.

4. *In prayer man presents himself in the furniture of all his relationships.* Though locked within the limits of his own personality, over which he cannot wholly pass, yet is he bound by sacred affinities to all who are about him. Like the ivy on the wall, the sensibilities and affections of the human soul are so many tendrils feeling after the props to which they may cling. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." We are born in the family-nest, and the first rational effort is to recognize the associates to whom we are thus irrevocably bound. It is through this domestic contact the first spark of intelligence is emitted, and the first germ of affection is developed. As we advance from infancy to childhood, new associations are formed in the school-room and on the playground, until at mature age all the ties are created by which we are fastened to life. To the end, new relations in business are established, new obligations of citizenship are assumed; and we turn neither to the right hand nor to the left, without striking those who are the partners of our being. Which, then, of the two is the more pleasing to the

eye: the man who stands between us in the nakedness of his selfish nature, or he who appears in the full dress of his relationships which he gracefully occupies through an honest and honorable life?

In no exercise do we so consciously recognize these as when we bow before God in prayer. In its first accent, as we lisp the name, "Our Father in heaven," we acknowledge community and fellowship with others. In the petition, "Thy kingdom come," we confess allegiance to a government and law universal in its sway over the race. In supplicating the "forgiveness of sins," we rest the plea upon the forgiveness which man should extend to man in the complicated interests between us all. Indeed, so holy is this mutual guardianship growing out of this inter-relationship and necessary inter-dependence, that the office of intercession invests each of us in prayer with a species of priesthood, the most sacred, perhaps, of all the links by which society is held together. In the discharge of no function is man more noble than when, in forgetfulness of his own wants, he covers with the benediction of his prayer the sufferings and woes of others. He is clothed with the truest dignity when in all his relationships, as in priestly vestments, he utters the universal prayer from a true and priestly heart.

5. *In prayer man is committed to every duty.* The splendid powers with which he is endowed have an ulterior end, beyond the goal assigned to each; and in their full complement can terminate only upon him whose image they all reflect. The diversified relations which each sustains to his fellows define the circle in which his obligations lie; whilst the law of right-

eousness to which conscience responds, points to the scales of a final judgment in which human actions shall be weighed. If now we search for a single term which shall embrace them all, it is the word *duty;* that which is due from man in all the relations he sustains to every class of beings in heaven and on earth. No word can be more solemn in its import, unless it be the sacred name of him from whose will it is derived.

When, therefore, man stands before his Maker in the furniture of all his relationships, he stands also in the investiture of all his trusts. From their entire equivalence, an intelligent worshipper must regard both with an equal eye; and thus, in prayer, we are weighted with all our obligations. Can that be a light service in which one takes up the comprehensive burden of life, bearing it to him through whose strength alone it can be borne? Is he without dignity of character, who can assume these responsibilities in bulk, with the pledge of a dauntless courage that he will discharge them before that Judge at whose bar he must hereafter be sisted and tried? Nothing in the universe is braver than the courage which measures the danger it must encounter; nor is anything stronger than the endurance which can outlive sacrifice and toil.

The reader will notice the simplicity of proof by which the dignity of prayer is here sought to be established. Is it an exercise worthy of the being who engages in it? If it presents man before us in the equipment of all his powers, if it introduces him to the highest fellowship the creature can enjoy, if it requires him to take the bearings of his whole career through

an endless future, if it clothes him with all the relations he can ever sustain, and invests him with all the responsibilities he can ever discharge—then it is hard to see wherein it derogates from the dignity of his nature. The highest honor that can be paid to any being is the opportunity, through the play of his own powers, to show that he is worthy of himself and of the faculties with which he is endowed.

PART SECOND.

PRAYER IN THE RELIGION OF GRACE.

CHAPTER I.

THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

IN the first part of this essay, prayer has been considered simply in the sphere *of natural religion.* In this second part, it is proposed to view it in its relation to the *system of grace.* The discussion will move on a higher plane, bringing out the whole THEOLOGY OF PRAYER, both as a matter of Christian doctrine, and also in the practical form in which it is wrought into Christian experience.

But where is the line to be drawn between the two systems? How is it that man, originally a subject of law, "is not under the law, but under grace"? How is the transfer possible from the one dominion to the other, and by what method is it accomplished? It will be necessary in this preliminary chapter to set forth the distinctive principles under which this change is wrought; and to show how the sinner is "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Let it be noted, then, that by the constitution of his being, man finds himself under authority. By this is meant, not that he was first endowed with intellect and will, and then by a secondary exercise of divine power was placed under the jurisdiction of law; but that in the idea and purpose of God in the creative act itself, and by force of the nature with which he was invested, he was fashioned to obedience. By whatever terms

we define man, we define him as moral. The attributes which distinguish him from the brute demand a moral atmosphere for their exercise, as truly as the lungs require the air which they inhale. This is furnished only through the law by which he is brought into relation with his Maker and with creatures like himself. The law is needed as the test of character, no less than as a rule of conduct. Antecedent to a single act, he needs the law by which to know himself; and without it he would be incapable either of probation or of progress. The inference is irresistible, that the law under which man was created in the full consciousness of his responsibility is unchangeable on its human, no less than on its divine side. We reason correctly, that if the law is the expression of the divine character as well as of the divine authority, if it bears the imprint of the divine attributes and comes forth from the divine nature itself, then it must remain unchangeable as the source from which it springs. The argument is irrefragable, and the correlative is that just presented from the human side. If the law under which man was in the first instance fashioned be necessary as giving scope to his moral activity, if it be the touchstone by which his character and actions are alike to be tested, then must it abide as long as the creature exists for whose probation it was intended. No alteration in his condition can absolve him from its control. Whether holy or apostate, whether a saint or a sinner, whether in this world of trial or in the world of retribution, through time and eternity, the law must remain without change upon which his moral powers depend.

Law, however, consists of two parts—the precept that guides, and the penalty that binds; the one disclosing the purpose of God, the other proclaiming his supreme authority. Neither of the two can be removed without dissolving the law itself. If the sanction be withdrawn, the command degenerates into mere advisory counsel; if the injunction be withheld, the penalty sinks into a blind and arbitrary threat. The law is constituted by the union of the two. It cannot be supposed that a perfect government, such as that of Jehovah, administered under a perfect law, will be left without protection against the disobedience and rebellion of its subjects. Hence the same creative act which formed man an intelligent and responsible being, also endowed him with immortality. As "made in the image and after the likeness of God," the resemblance holds, not only in the intellectual and moral faculties, but partly at least in this continuity of being, this "power of an endless life." Upon this inalienable possession of man the law takes its lien, and the creature is held under bond for constant and perfect obedience. Under the operation of naked law, obedience is to find its reward in the continued blessedness with which this "endless life" is to be filled; and transgression is to be punished with the wretchedness with which the same continuous life is to be forever charged. The alternative is, obey and live, or disobey and die the death which never dies. In the instant of transgression the law executes the mortgage which it holds on the life of the sinner, and brings it under forfeiture to the penalty by which it was covered. Under such a dispensation of pure and simple law,

the doom of the transgressor is at once sealed, and he passes forever beyond the reach of mercy and hope.

The absolute unchangeableness of the divine law has been presented with some degree of fulness and emphasis, because it is the bed-rock on which divine grace founds its plan for the salvation of sinful men. If infinite pity and love shall unite with infinite wisdom and power to devise the way by which the sinner may be rescued from his terrible doom, it must be through an act of sovereign grace alone; and of grace that cuts the channel of deliverance through the granite rock of the law itself. Mercy is not shown in cutting down the law within the diminished ability of the transgressor; nor in introducing a new law with easier requisitions as a substitute for the old. As already shown, the law can neither be repealed nor modified; what it says once, it says always—always expounding God to the creature, and defining man to himself. But grace undertakes to satisfy the law in all its demands against the sinner. Its testimony is that "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 3, 4.) The method of grace is perfectly safe for the sinner, because it never presents God in contradiction with himself. The language of grace is at the same time the language of law. The reconciliation between them is complete; for "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other: truth shall

spring out of earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven." (Ps. lxxxv. 10, 11.) Justice, no less than mercy, is the guardian of the believer's hope; and all the divine attributes unite to lay the ground of his assurance of eternal life. It was necessary that Israel should see uncovered the bed of the Red Sea in escaping from Egypt; and they could not pass into the Land of Promise until the channel of the Jordan should afford a passage to their feet upon the stones of the covenant. In like manner, there is no deliverance for guilty man except through the bed of the law, as grace cuts the channel through which he shall escape into the liberty of the gospel.

If, then, the method of grace is by first meeting the requirements of justice, the question arises by whom shall this satisfaction be rendered to the violated law? The answer leads up directly to the topic which forms the heading of this chapter. Manifestly the transgressor himself is disqualified from offering the perfect obedience by which the law shall be "magnified and made honorable." Setting him then aside, where shall a substitute be found competent for the mighty task? Certainly not among the creatures, even the most exalted; for every created being is under law for himself, owing obedience up to the measure of his own powers, with no surplusage of merit which may be put to the credit of another. The highest seraph in heaven can do no more than fulfil his own obligations. When the challenge goes forth from the throne, "whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" there is none among the creatures to answer "here am I, send me." The deep silence that reigns throughout the

heavenly court returns the confession that none of the sons of the mighty "can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him."

If deliverance must come through complete vindication of the dishonored law, this must be rendered by one who is himself above the law—whose obedience, being optional, is capable of being reckoned to another. Evidently this takes the search beyond the range of all creatures in heaven and on earth. Jehovah alone can solve the problem through the mysterious constitution of his own being.

It should fill us with devout amazement to find the secret mode of the divine existence disclosed only in connection with the method of grace. The fundamental revelation in the Old Testament was, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." (Deut. vi. 4.) Yet, strangely enough, right here in this emphatic assertion of the divine unity, the original text conveys the hint of a plural subsistence, in the close conjunction of both single and plural names. The plural designation is expressly declared to be the "one Lord"; and this hint is repeated as often as this plural name occurs in these ancient records. It was reserved, however, for the "fulness of time" to make the disclosure complete, in the redemption of our lost race. The substitute, who being above law must come under law for man's rescue, is to be found only in the pavilion of light where, in the language of Erskine, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost sit around the council-board of redemption. In this adorable Trinity-in-unity, grace finds the solution of the immense problem. In the distinction of persons in the Godhead, are found

the parties who may assume the several functions to be fulfilled; while these, through the essential unity of the divine nature, are necessarily bound together in an undivided whole. The mystery is indeed beyond human exposition; who "by searching can find out God," who "can find out the Almighty unto perfection"? If no one has unravelled the secret even of finite existence, who shall be able to disclose the mystery of absolute, uncreated being?

The Jehovah-Elohim of the Old Testament is the Father, Son and Holy Ghost of the New: and these three, being the one God, devise and execute the scheme of grace, arranging the parts between them. It is the office of the Father, as first in the order of thought, to represent the majesty and claims of the broken law. It is the office of the Son, as the Father's immediate agent in all the works of creation and providence, to be his agent also in working out the grace in the sinner's redemption. It is the office of the Holy Ghost, who, proceeding from them both, preserves the unity in the Trinity, to act under the commission and seal of both in applying this grace in its third and final stage. This arrangement of the scheme, by which the sacred three come under agreement as to their respective offices, is what is termed the "Covenant of Grace," and sometimes the "Covenant of Redemption": two titles for the same transaction—the one pointing out the source from which the scheme proceeds, the sovereign grace of God alone; the other designating the method of the sinner's deliverance, through redemption from the curse.

The law had said, "the soul that sinneth, it shall

die"; and the ransom can be nothing short of the life of the substitute: a price which can be paid only by him who "has power to lay down his life and power to take it again." (John x. 18.) Upon this mission the Father sends the Son; "this commandment," says Christ, "have I received of my Father." To him the Father gives a seed to be his reward and crown: "all that the Father giveth me shall come to me." (John vi. 37.) His work of atonement and sacrifice the Father accepts as the ground of the sinner's pardon, and his perfect obedience as the ground of the sinner's acceptance before him, "wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Eph. i. 6.) "Having obtained eternal redemption for us, he hath by his own blood entered into the holy place," to make intercession for his own; and "is set, an high priest, on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens." (Hebrew ix. 12 and viii. 1.) Gathering his priestly robes around him, he ascends, the Priest-King, upon his mediatorial throne, administering the grace he has purchased through his blood—placing between the mitre and the crown the "counsel of peace," which he has executed for a guilty race. (Zech. vi. 13.)

At this point a difficulty emerges, which to finite reason would seem insuperable: how can a divine person come under the law to obey the precept, much more to endure the penalty, which is death? We thus confront another of the great mysteries of the Christian faith, the incarnation of the Son of God. The fact itself is clearly established by the testimony of the Scriptures: "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman,

made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) Again, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." (John i. 14.) Again, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 6–8.) The same is declared in ancient prophecy: "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; . . . and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." (Isa. ix. 6.) Close attention to the language in which this mystery is affirmed should protect the doctrine of the Incarnation from the misconceptions with which it has been clouded. It is by no means implied that the divine and human natures are blended, so as to form a third which shall be distinguished from both; nor that one is absorbed in the other, so as to be lost from view; nor that either is overlaid by its fellow, so as to be practically suppressed. On the contrary, it is carefully announced that the divine *person* of the Son assumes a true human nature, which never existed as a separate entity, but only in conjunction with the person who assumed it as the organ of his own purposes. The language from John's Gospel, above cited, is singularly explicit: "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt (literally tented or tabernacled) among us." The Son

of God dwelt on earth in human form, as one dwells in a tent: both natures preserving their own properties, without mixture or confusion; yet both under the control of his divinity, in an alliance so intimate that what is done in the one nature or in the other is properly ascribed to the person to whom they both belong. No room is therefore left for the suspicion that the divinity of our Lord underwent any change by the addition of a human element; which, of course, would be a contradiction in terms. Indeed, as though to guard against derogating from our Lord's dignity whilst "dwelling in this tent," it is added, "and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Nor was this incarnation in any sense unreal—only the appearance or mere seeming of a man, without the substance. Our Lord took upon him human nature in both its component parts, "a true body and a reasonable soul." His is the only real incarnation of Deity the world has ever known, the alleged incarnations in pagan mythology being but the travesty of the same. So impenetrable is this mystery which unites the two poles of being, the finite and the infinite, that even when the suggestion has come down from patriarchal tradition human wisdom has not been able to work it up in any of the systems of human philosophy or religion.

The substitute is at length found, who can take man's place under the law and redeem his soul from death. Not simply allied to the race by the possession of a common nature, but united with it through actual birth, he has a human will in which to render obedience, a human soul in which to experience human

emotions, and a human life to lay down under the penalty. This human nature which qualifies him to be a Saviour through obedience unto death, is possessed and filled with his supreme divinity—just as the temple of old was filled with the glory of the Lord in the visions of Isaiah and of Ezekiel. All the work wrought by him as man had in it the fulness of power which belonged to him as God. His words, though uttered in human speech, were the words of the Father: "as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." (John viii. 28.) In like manner his stupendous miracles he ascribes to his Father: "the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for whatsoever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (John v. 19.) His divine majesty poured a glory into his human obedience and atoning sacrifice, which imparted to both an infinite value. Then he "restored that which he took not away"—"making an end of sins," and "bringing in everlasting righteousness."

The design of this chapter is simply to present a broad outline of the *system of grace*, without anticipating the details which will be better handled in their proper connection in the pages that follow. This sketch is, however, sufficiently full to call the reader's attention to some important suggestions:

1. *In the person of his Son the Father finds an agent with whom he may consistently treat on the sinner's behalf.* If our conception of the divine holiness was at all adequate, we should more clearly appreciate the difficulty in the initiation of the scheme of grace. How shall God, who cannot look upon sin with allow-

ance, restrain his just indignation long enough to entertain the first thought of mercy? Or if infinite pity should for an instant smother his resentment, how shall he draw near enough to offer terms of reconciliation without immediately consuming the transgressor by his presence? Nay, would not the proposal of pardon be to man rioting in his guilt a confession either of the injustice or severity of the original sentence? How can negotiations of peace be opened with subjects under attainder of treason, without dissolving the law itself and abdicating the empire of the universe? Plainly a mediator must intervene between the parties at issue. Jehovah must say, as of old to rebellious Israel, "Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee" (Exodus xxxiii. 5): and then, as before, he must descend in "the cloudy pillar," and "talk face to face with Moses in the tabernacle." Indeed, the terrors of an accusing conscience will drive the sinner as well, to ask for a daysman between himself and God; as did Israel when they said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." (Exodus xx. 19.) To whom then could the Father more joyfully commit the interests of his government and law than to his only begotten Son, with whom he had infinite communion in holiness and love before the foundations of the earth were laid? Here, then, in the choice and perfect accord of such a mediator, we have a guarantee, at the outset, of the safety and success of the scheme devised between them.

2. *The intrinsic value of Christ's human obedience, apart from the glory shed upon it from his divine person.* The latter has been briefly signalized in a preceding paragraph; but the human obedience itself deserves to be considered in at least two particulars. It was throughout a *sinless* obedience. Of himself it was distinctly affirmed that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Hebrews vii. 26.) Three times also the testimony was delivered from heaven, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii. 17, and xvii. 5; also, for substance, in John xii. 28.) His obedience, therefore, was perfect, without flaw or stain—like his own seamless robe, without a rent anywhere to disfigure it. It was a sinless obedience, such as was required of the first Adam, and upon which he and the posterity within his loins would have been justified forever. What solid ground is, then, here laid for a sinner's trust in this scheme of grace!

Again, it was an obedience singularly *unique in being rendered to both parts of the law.* This distinguishes the obedience of our Lord from that of every other being in the universe. The angels "who kept their first estate" obey the precept alone; for they were never under the power of sin to endure the penalty. Fallen angels and fallen men, if obedience can be predicated of them in any sense, obey only the penalty under which they lie condemned. But that of our glorious Substitute and Head covers the whole area of law, and sounds its lowest depth. In his active obedience, he fulfilled all that the law enjoins; in his sacrifice on the cross, he satisfied its vindica-

tory justice through a death that was strictly penal. In its complete exhaustion of all the law contains, it is an obedience wider in its scope, and greater in value, than the aggregate obedience of all the creatures, which, on their part, is always a continuing obedience, whilst his is an obedience entirely finished and brought within a period.

3. *All the attributes of God unite in constructing the platform on which the redeemed sinner stands.* He is not saved through the weakness of pity, which shrinks from the infliction of a deserved doom. This would be an aspersion of the Lawgiver, as harsh and tyrannical in his exactions. It is a robust grace that designs the salvation offered in the gospel, and does homage alike to all the perfections of the unchangeable Jehovah. Justice sheathes its sword at the foot of Calvary, and stands sentinel with mercy, in admitting the saint into the joys of heaven. How great the security to a soul reposing upon all that enters into the character of the Most High, with not a single attribute to arise and challenge its entrance into glory!

4. It is little more than a continuance of this thought, that the *righteousness of Christ has already been officially proclaimed as accepted by the Father.* This was done through our Lord's resurrection, by his triumphant ascension into heaven, and was publicly sealed and confirmed by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. (John vii. 39; xvi. 7; Acts ii. 24, 33; xvii. 31; Rom. i. 4.) Proof is thus given to the church in every age that the whole work of Christ has been approved by the Father, as fulfilling all the terms of the covenant between them; and his name is officially

proclaimed as the "only name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.) How vast the difference between the hope which rests upon a guarantee such as this, and the doubtful expectation which founds upon the sinner's own stained and blotted record! And well may we echo the choice of the apostle, who desired to "be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith"! (Phil. iii. 9.)

5. *The scheme of grace is built into the very subsistence of the Godhead.* This crowning guarantee of its perfect safety is expressed in this awkward but intensive language, with a deep sense of its solemn import. It is such a scheme as could be devised and executed only by a Triune Being; and the proof is that, whenever rejected, the doctrine of Atonement and the doctrine of the Trinity have always been rejected together. A compulsory logic binds them indissolubly as twin-truths, for the parties to the scheme must be found within the Deity; and yet the offices to be discharged are so distinct, that they cannot be consolidated upon a single agent. The same identical party cannot be the sender, and also the sent; cannot administer the law, and also suffer its penalty; cannot give the commission, and also receive and execute the same; cannot be the representative of God, and also of the sinner who offends him. The God of the Socinian cannot therefore be the author of this system of grace; and he who trustingly rests his hope of eternal life upon its provisions, must adoringly worship forevermore the Triune Jehovah—Father,

Son and Holy Ghost. The soul is filled with awe in contemplating the majesty of such a salvation, glorious as the God who is its author. And if its foundation is laid within the mystery of his own being, what power on earth, or in hell, can shake the everlasting pillars on which it is securely placed? Let the voice be muffled in deepest reverence which undertakes to utter the dreadful alternative: not until a schism shall occur in the Godhead, and the Persons of the adorable Trinity shall be wrenched apart, and their glorious unity be dissolved forever; not until this shall occur, which it would be blasphemy to conceive if it were not uttered only to be rejected with a holy horror, can that grace fail to save which was devised in the counsels of the eternity past, and whose results are to be gathered into the glories of the eternity which is to come.

CHAPTER II.

PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE OFFICE OF THE FATHER.

THE dissertation in the preceding chapter is not irrelevant to the subject of this essay, as to the general reader it may have appeared. If man is now under a dispensation of grace rather than of unbending law, his intercourse with the Deity will be in accordance with the new relations which have been instituted. His prayer will be addressed, not to God absolute, known to him in nature only as the Creator and Ruler of the universe, but to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, revealed in Scripture as devising and executing a scheme of mercy for the salvation of the guilty and the lost. The subject of prayer will therefore open all the parts of this mighty plan, and the offices discharged severally by the Persons of the Godhead. In the order in which these occur, it will be necessary first to treat of prayer in its relation to the *office of the Father.*

Prayer may undoubtedly be offered to each of the Three Persons, for two substantial reasons: The first is, that however they may be discriminated, they cannot be separated one from the other. The three do not *make* one God, as by composition; they *are* the one God, through the indivisible essence or being which is the equal property of each. If, therefore, divine in the supreme sense, each Person may equally be the

immediate object of address, though not to the exclusion of the others. They may no more be separated in their worship than in their being: the one of necessity involves the other. The second reason is, that in the functions which they discharge, each is supreme in his own work, and must stand in immediate relation to the creature who is to be saved. Whatever may be the official subordination between these Persons themselves, each fills the entire circle of obligations assumed by himself. It would seem fit, therefore, that each may be immediately addressed in all that concerns his specific work. The natural mode of communication, however, would be *to* the Father, *through* the Son and *by* the Spirit; these prepositions simply indicating the coördination of the parties to the covenant, and of their several offices.

In discussing the doctrine of the Trinity we labor under the disadvantage of having no generic term to indicate the distinction involved which is not liable to misconstruction. There being no analogy to this mode of existence among the creatures, no word can be invented which will accurately define it. The only resource is to appropriate some familiar word in a sense peculiar to itself, which shall render it strictly technical,—after the nomenclature of every other branch of human science. The term Person has been chosen for this purpose, employed, however, in its technical and theologic sense, not implying separate existence, as when it is used in reference to men, but simply a mode of the divine existence which admits of distinction without division or separation. An insoluble mystery, indeed! but by no means the only mys-

tery which science and philosophy find themselves obliged to accept without explanation, or plunge into the chaos of universal scepticism. However incomprehensible, the fact is nevertheless clearly revealed, that the one God is Father, Son and Spirit—these names indicating a relationship which is indissoluble, and upon the basis of which the functions are distributed between the three in the economy of grace.

These terms of relationship suggest not only a distinction in the Godhead, but also the preservation of unity in this very distinction: that whilst the Deity is threefold in the mode of his being, he is at the same time one and alone in that being itself. The designations Father and Son amongst men, for example, imply the derivation of substance from one to the other. The same relations in the Deity import a like derivation of the divine essence from the Father to the Son, but without succession in time or separateness of existence. There can be no succession of moments in a being who is infinite and eternal. But the whole divine essence must be conceived by us as existing eternally in both, yet as being in the Son from the Father. A certain priority is indeed involved; but not priority in time as by succession, but priority of order and relation. The two are thus distinguished the one from the other, whilst the two remain one and indivisible in the co-equal possession of absolute Godhood. With our notions bounded by the limits of time and space, it may seem a purely metaphysical abstraction, this communication of essence without actual flow from one to the other, involving succession in time. This, indeed, would be true in the

communication from one being to another entirely separate; but it is excluded in the communication within a being who is one and alone. The unity is not broken, the diversity being one simply of relation and order of conception. Thus when the Scriptures speak of the Son as "the only begotten of the Father" (John i. 14, 18), it must be in the sense of an eternal generation: which, however, would express no relation between them, except that of eternal participation in the same numerical essence by the Son from the Father.

In the method of grace, then, prayer may be offered to the Father,—

1. *As he is the official representative of the Godhead.* If the distinctions in the Godhead be not simply nominal, but real—if they are founded upon relations which justify the use throughout the New Testament of the pronouns I, Thou, He—if especially the functions which these fulfil are clearly distinguished,—then it would seem necessary that jointly they should be represented by one of the three, and that this should be the Person who is first in the order of thought. The order in which they eternally exist should be the order in which they eternally act. So we find it to be in all the accounts of the divine activity. Thus we are told in general terms, "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth": and be it noted, it is the plural name of the Deity here used. It is not inconsistent, therefore, with this testimony, to be informed more specifically in the New Testament, that "to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him;

and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (1 Cor. viii. 6.) Nor, again, as in Hebrews i. 2, that "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Nor, yet again, as in John i. 1–3, "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." Nor, with greater fulness of language, in Colossians i. 15–17, his dear Son, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." These passages most clearly intimate unity of operation, arising out of the unity of being, in the Deity. We are careful to say unity, not union; for there might be union between parties wholly separated, or simple coöperation; a concurrence of effort, and not unity of purpose and design. The first in the blessed Trinity, as he is in a sense the fountain of being, should be also the fountain of authority. As the divine essence abides in the Son and in the Spirit through their eternal participation in it with the Father, in the maintenance of this unity he should stand as its representative in all the divine activities.

As in creation, so in grace: in both spheres it is from the Father to the Son—the Father, of whom are

all things, and the Son, by whom are all things. In John x. 30, our Lord asserts his unity and equality with the Father, "I and my Father are one"; in John xiv. 28, he declares, "My Father is greater than I." The contradiction is removed by comparing the context in the two statements. In the former, he is showing the safety of his sheep: none shall pluck them out of his hand, nor out of his Father's hand, for he and his Father are one. In the latter, he is comforting his disciples in view of his departure to the Father, for the Father is greater than he. In the one case he emphasizes his equality with the Father, as God; in the other, he acknowledges his subordination as mediator. It would overwhelm the reader to cite a tithe of the passages in which the Son recognizes the Father's representative authority over him in his redeeming work. A very few may be given as specimens of the whole. He thus describes his commission received from the Father: "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which sent me" (John v. 30); "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John vi. 38); "I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not" (John vii. 28); "I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me" (John viii. 42); in his priestly prayer, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do" (John xvii. 4). In similar language he defers to the same authority in his words and works: "my doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (John vii. 16); "as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things" (John viii. 28); "the Father which sent me, he gave

me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak" (John xii. 49); "the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (John xiv. 24). So also of his works: "I must work the works of him that sent me" (John ix. 4); "the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me" (John x. 25); "the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John xiv. 10). These testimonies settle the fact of his official subordination to the Father; and with this fact we are now alone concerned, reserving the special reasons for it till a little later in this chapter.

If, then, in this scheme of grace it is necessary that the first Person of the Godhead should sustain this relation of official supremacy, it is easy to see why the natural mode of address in our prayers should be to the same Person who is the acknowledged representative of all the parties to the covenant.

2. *Prayer seeks the ear of the Father, in whom resides the seat of sovereignty in providence.* "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth" is the form of the doctrine in the Old Testament; "a sparrow shall not fall on the ground without your Father" is the style in the New: in both alike a universal and special providence is affirmed. Indeed, this is but the correlate of creation itself. So complex is what we term nature, so vast her scope, so intricate all her adjustments, so concealed her forces, so apparently constant the laws she obeys, that the power which upholds is but the left hand answering to the right hand which creates. The correspondence holds in another particular: the sovereign will which created

all things is the sovereign will that disposes and controls all things. Apart from the introduction of sin, though holiness should reign supreme throughout the universe, the various orders of intelligent beings are distinctly graded at the pleasure of him whose will there was none to dispute. How much more must this control be unchallenged and supreme in a world like ours, where every right has been forfeited by rebellion?

Let it be observed, too, that whilst science is enlarging for us the domain of nature, man becomes more consciously helpless under the dangerous forces which his daring curiosity has evoked from concealment. The cast-iron machine grinds on apparently with the severity of a mechanical fatalism, while events fall out to him as contingencies beyond his power to anticipate or resist. How unutterably helpless is he, if there be no creator whose hand still touches all the springs of power in nature herself; and if this creator be not the infinite Father, to whom belongs the sovereignty to which he can appeal in the hour of peril and of fear?

3. *It is the office of the Father to enforce the claims of the violated law.* In a preceding section, the official supremacy of the first Person in the Godhead was set forth as a revealed fact; the special reason for which, at that time withheld, must now be stated. The method of grace requires a Redeemer who shall meet the exactions of justice on the sinner's behalf: this, of course, necessitates an executive into whose hand the whole administration of law shall be placed. The two functions are exact equivalents: the law

obeyed must correspond with the law enforced, and the sinner's substitute must stand face to face with the Ruler and the Judge. Thus two of the parties to the covenant are brought before us in the legal relations which they reciprocally hold. The apostle says (1 John iv. 14): "We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world"; here is the commission received by the Son which gives validity to all his acts. In Hebrews x. 5, this Son saith, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me"; here is the Father's provision of the nature in which the amazing trust shall be executed. Through his entire ministry, the Son recognizes his dependence upon the Father's protection and blessing. (John xi. 41, 42; xii. 27, 28; xvii. 1.) He returns his work, when finished, for the Father's judicial approval (Luke xxiii. 46; John xvii. 4): and the verdict is rendered through his resurrection and ascension to heaven. (Acts ii. 32, 33; Phil. ii. 9.)

The Father's administration of law does not terminate here. In the case of every sinner who is saved, there is the conveyance of pardon through a judicial decree which accounts to him the righteousness of this substitute as the sole ground of his justification: and in the entire process of the believer's sanctification, the benefits of redemption are applied by the Divine Spirit, in conformity with the pleading of the Son, judicially heard and answered by the Father. It is plain, therefore, why, under this dispensation of grace, our prayers should be offered to the Father as the administrator of the law. He who enforced its claims

in accomplishing the sinner's redemption, holds the right to issue the pardon which it procured, that it may be sealed upon the sinner's conscience; and every petition for sanctifying grace must ascend to him from whom this grace originally and authoritatively proceeds.

4. *Prayer should be addressed to the Father, as the author and source of adoption into his family.* Adoption is possibly the most comprehensive of our evangelical terms. All the doctrines of grace are folded within it, and emerge in its analysis. Just as we peel leaf after leaf from the rosebud in the garden, to find the heart of the flower lying in the core, so here we strip off the successive doctrines of our faith, to find "the grace of God which bringeth salvation" hidden within the centre. Here, for example, is the *legal* change from the condition of servants into that of sons, which is justification. Here, again, is the *spiritual* change wrought upon the nature of the sinner, by which he is fitted for communion with God, which is the new birth continued in a progressive sanctification. Here, finally, is the believer's translation to heaven, where he finds the glorious consummation of grace in the eternal enjoyment of God as the portion of his soul. All that salvation implies—deliverance from the punishment, the power, the pollution, and, finally, the presence of sin—is involved in this adoption. In the grasp of this single word are held not the cold dogmas of a creed, but these transformed into the force of a true life beating within the bosom of Christian experience.

Adoption constitutes one a child who is not such by

nature. Amongst men it is little more than a legal fiction, by which one is treated as a child who cannot by any process be made actually one. The hand of benevolence picks up a waif from the street, and "puts him among the children"; perhaps some legal form is recognized, by which a species of parental authority is acquired and a measure of parental reponsibility is assumed. But this is all. Adoption with God means immensely more than this—the actual transformation of a strange seed into a sonship which is real and divine. The first Person in the Godhead in his executive function passes the adopting act by which the redeemed sinner is entitled to all the privileges and immunities of the children of God. The methods by which this legal adoption is carried into effect will not be anticipated here. We are now concerned only with this: that the legislative power which designates the subjects of this adoption, and determines the benefits which accrue from the new relation, pertains to the Father by virtue of that official supremacy which we have already seen belongs to him in this economy of grace.

Here, then, is an obvious reason for addressing prayer to him. The soul that is struggling in the anguish of a new birth will cry to him from whom the call to this birth first came. The heart striving to throw off "the spirit of bondage again to fear," will plead for "the Spirit of adoption" with him who has power to send that Spirit forth. He who rejoices in the freedom of a son, will pour his thanksgiving into the ear of the blessed Father within whose arms he is sheltered. The more clearly we perceive the order

and method of grace in working out the believer's salvation, the more distinctly will the Father's adopting love be recognized as the source from which it flows.

5. *In the Father is embodied the obligation of supreme worship.* The duty of prayer is unquestionably grounded on the nature of man as originally made in the image of the Creator. His intellectual and moral faculties reflect, at an infinite distance indeed, the corresponding perfections of the Deity: alas! now dreadfully dimmed and distorted by the sin which has clouded and corrupted his original powers. Still, they remain permanent properties of his being, indispensable to him as a rational and responsible creature. However low he may have fallen, and however degraded his faculties, he can never be discharged, in this world or in the next, from the obligation of a pure and constant worship. Now, if Jehovah is revealed in Scripture as Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the worship rendered must embrace the three. As stated in the opening of this chapter, they are inseparable in the unity of their being, and must be inseparable in the worship offered. However the mind may dwell in adoring thought upon the respective offices of each, even these are so woven into the unity of the divine operation that all are embraced in the homage of a united worship. Now, the Father, whom the old theologians were fond of describing as the *fons et origo* of Deity, by the force of this conception represents this unity of the divine essence; and by virtue of his official supremacy in the administration of grace he represents the unity of the divine operation, as before the

unity of the divine substance. In this representative character it is his office to receive the united worship offered through him to the entire Godhead.

6. *Finally, in the Person of the Father we especially contemplate God as the portion of the soul.* The truth is overwhelming in its majesty, that the great God should offer himself as the believer's portion forever. No wonder that the apostle, in considering it, should style it "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Nor would we venture to utter or think it, but for the assurance of it in the Holy Scriptures. "The Lord's portion is his people" is almost the refrain of Moses's song in Deuteronomy xxxii. 9. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance"—"God is my portion forever"—is the burst of joy from David's lips throughout the Psalms (xvi. 5; lxxiii. 26; cxix. 57; cxlii. 5). Jehovah declares: "The portion of Jacob—the Lord of hosts is his name." (Jer. x. 16; li. 19.) In the New Testament the promise is that, in the highest sense, Jehovah will be our God, and we shall be his people. (Heb. viii. 10.) And the result of grace, according to the prayer of Paul, is that "we shall be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. iii. 19.) These general expressions denote blessings which are definite and special. If filled from the fulness of God forever, then does he commune with us in all his glorious attributes: his power is made over to us for our strength; his wisdom, for our knowledge; his justice and mercy, for our salvation; his holiness, for our purity; his glory, for our blessedness and joy forevermore. Not only in his absolute perfections, but in his threefold personality, does he become our

inheritance: as the Father, he adopts us; as the Son, he redeems us; and as the Spirit, he transfigures and glorifies us.

Whilst, however, the believer sustains a precise relation to the second and third Persons of the Godhead, it must not be forgotten that these perform their several functions in official subordination to the authority of the first. The Son, when "the end shall come," will deliver "up the kingdom to God, even the Father," "that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.) It would seem, then, to be the Father's function to convey to the saint his inheritance; and if this consists in the glory of his Sonship, the fulness of the Godhead will flow from the three, through the hand and under the seal of the first judicially authenticating the title. To him, therefore, the prayer of faith and of hope should be offered, as the executive under whose decree in the counsels of eternity the inheritance was adjudged, and the title confirmed, of all the saints in glory.

Two important suggestions will suitably close this chapter. The first is that, in habitually regarding the Father as seated in the audience-chamber officially to receive our petitions, we keep very close to the unity of the Godhead. If we abide by the teaching of the Scriptures, we must think of the three; for upon this very distinction the whole structure of the gospel is made to rest. Yet there cannot be three Gods. Just as in nature two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same moment, so in the realm of thought, by the same law of exclusion, there can be only one being who is infinite and eternal. The three must therefore

be the one, in the single conception of a being who is Tri-une. Now, in offering our worship to the Father as the representative of the Godhead, we are held to this idea of Trinity-in-Unity; and we are still more firmly held, when this official supremacy of the first founds upon the eternal relation which, as the Father, he sustains to the Son and to the Spirit. It is of immense service in our devotional exercises to be preserved from all confusion of thought—the very form of our worship practically uniting before us the Three-in-the-One.

The second suggestion is that, in praying directly to the Father, the tenderness of divine grace is brought conspicuously into view. It is not simply that the sinner is forgiven: that would be an exceeding mercy, to be forever discharged from the penalty which he has incurred. It is not merely to be admitted into the presence and to the fellowship of the Most High; this, indeed, would be grace upon grace. But it is to be lifted from the plane of a subject under law, into the relation of a son in the family and household of God. It is no longer to render the homage of a distant obedience, but the filial service of a loving child. It is, with a nature transformed into the divine likeness, to receive blessedness and glory by right of heirship, in direct transmission from a Father's hand. Not until we reach the heavenly state and look upon the face of our King shall we know the fulness and tenderness of that love which enables us to say, when we pray, "Our Father which art in heaven."

CHAPTER III.

PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE OFFICE OF THE SON.

THROUGH the office-work of the Father, as already delineated, we are placed at the initiation of the scheme of grace. Through this, as a majestic vestibule, we enter into the august temple and explore the mysteries within the ark of the covenant. True, indeed, the functions of the Adorable Three are inseparably blended, like the rays which enter into the composition of light; and the final blessedness of heaven flows to the saint, through the channel of adopting love, from the fulness of glory as it dwells in the eternal Father. Still he, as the representative of the Godhead, is the supreme administrator of law; and appoints the Mediator, if one shall interpose on behalf of the transgressor, and adjudicates the reconciliation which shall be effected. It is only when we trace the execution of the terms of the covenant that the method of salvation is completely unfolded to our view. This introduces at once the topic now to be discussed, THE WHOLE WORK OF THE SON, whom "God hath sent to be the propitiation for our sins," AND THE RELATION WHICH PRAYER SUSTAINS TO IT. The subject is of exceeding breadth; which, however, we will seek to reduce within limits that shall not exhaust the reader's patience.

I. Observe, then, that it is THE PREROGATIVE OF THE SON TO BE THE IMMEDIATE REVEALER OF GOD. It would be

presumptuous to pronounce in what way it should please the Infinite Jehovah to disclose himself to the creatures whom he has formed. Still, two facts are plainly affirmed in the Scriptures. The first is, that no created being can ever know God in his absolute essence. When Moses offered the overbold prayer, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," the answer was returned: "Thou canst not see my face, and live." Yet the revelation was made through a visible symbol of the divine majesty, of which only a receding glimpse was afforded to the Hebrew lawgiver—plainly hinting the partial knowledge to be enjoyed under that obscure system of types and shadows. (Exodus xxxiii. 20–23.) The second testimony is, that all revelation of God is mediated through the agency of the second Person of the Trinity: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John i. 18.) The sweep of this far-reaching fact does not seem to us to be sufficiently considered even by those who expound the prophetical office of Christ, which is grounded in it.

It may be rejoined that the same Scriptures also teach that a knowledge of God is afforded through the works of creation and providence, as well as the knowledge coming to us through a personal disclosure. The authority of the passages cited in support of this is freely admitted: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." (Psalm xix. 1–3.) With

even greater explicitness the inspired apostle testifies "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." (Rom. i. 20.) It should not, however, be overlooked that the created universe itself, in all its vast proportions, is the work of this very Son, whose office it is to reveal the Father. What, then, is nature herself, in all her variety of forms, but a mighty word by which the great Revealer makes the Godhead known? Let the reader note the emphasis with which the universe is represented as *spoken* into existence: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." (Psalm xxxiii. 6, 9.) "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." (Heb. xi. 3.) Again, "By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water." (2 Peter iii. 5.)

It is full of significance in connection with this, that he who at the creation said "let there be light," should be styled "the Word." And that this is a name by which he is eternally designated, appears from the descriptive and qualifying clause, "in the beginning": "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." A finite mind can only be led up to an approximate conception of eternity, through the successive notations to which it is accustomed in time. When through the ascending series we reach the first of these notations which marks to us the beginning of time, there we are

left at the lip of the boundless sea stretching forever beyond the reach of vision, or of thought; and this out-reaching of the mind to overtake the limitless beyond, is the nearest approach that can be made to the grasp of eternity itself. Thus in the record of creation, "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth": we drop into eternity, as soon as we get beyond the successions in time. So "in the beginning," just as time emerges from the depths of eternity past, the second of the sacred three is known as "the Word"—coördinate with the other name which he bears, as "the Son." The latter presents him in his personal distinction, in the communion of the Godhead; the former designates his official function as the revealer of Deity. As thought lies hid in the recesses of the mind until the spoken word clothes it with body and form, conveying it to the fellowship of other minds, so by analogy he is styled preëminently "the Word," by whom all knowledge of the unsearchable Jehovah is communicated to the creature. Should we, then, be remanded to nature alone for the knowledge of the Supreme Being, we would still be indebted to the teachings of him who is styled "the Word:" for "God hath spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." (Heb. i. 2.)

But we must go deeper than this. In the domain of nature we touch only the outer works of God, the hem only of the robe which he wears. We read the Creator's thoughts, indeed, but through symbols which must first be deciphered. Suggestive hints are cast broadly forth, the seeds of knowledge to be grouped

hereafter in scientific array. The scale on which creation is projected sufficiently declares the divine majesty and power; the wonderful adjustments which pervade the whole equally evince the resources of infinite wisdom; while the adaptation in all these to the use and comfort of man attests alike the wisdom and goodness of the universal Father. Still, one instinctively feels the revelation to be distant and cold. We worship as yet in the outer court, but have not reached the inner sanctuary, where we may rest in the enjoyment of infinite love. "The eternal power and Godhead," indeed, are clearly enough seen in "the things that are made." As we gaze, for example, on the stars above us, we echo the stanza in Addison's well-known hymn:—

> "In reason's ear they all rejoice,
> And utter forth a glorious voice—
> Forever singing as they shine,
> The hand that made us is divine."

But the soul yearns for a more intimate communion with the august being in whose image it was fashioned. If, then, we are to enjoy conscious intercourse with him who is "the Father of spirits," we must in measure apprehend him as he is in himself, not merely in the goings-forth of his power. What we denominate nature may teach us this last, as we move in her appointed circuits; but to know God in the properties of his spiritual being lifts us to a plane above that to which any of the processes of mere reason can conduct us. No analogies drawn from the world of sense can disclose to us the spirituality of God's nature, nor the mode of his subsistence, nor the working of a single

attribute, nor the reconciliation of them all in the harmony in which they so perfectly blend. Who, for example, can possibly define the method of the divine knowledge? In our course of reasoning we proceed with cautious hesitation from premises to conclusion, lest we slip by the way. But this would construe God's knowledge as inferential and derived, cancelling his omniscience at a stroke. Only through a direct disclosure are we able, in a spirit of devotion, to sing—

> "Eternity, with all its years,
> Stands present to thy view;
> To thee there's nothing old appears;
> Great God! there's nothing new."

Or, to employ another illustration, how shall reason, unaided by revelation, reconcile the mercy which pardons the criminal, with the inflexible justice which inflicts the penalty?

If reason cannot enter the pavilion of light to discover him "whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. vi. 16), is it any more competent to define the relation in which as moral beings we stand to him? If the faculties with which man is endowed require a law for their guidance, what is the scope of that law? What are its specific provisions, and what are the tests through which obedience shall be ascertained? What are the conditions under which the creature is placed? What is the extent of the probation assigned? If this be limited in duration, what is the reward promised to final perseverance, and what the penalty threatened against failure? Shall recovery be possible to the lapsed; and, if so, by what method shall restoration to virtue be accomplished? In short, how shall rea-

son alone uncover all the principles of God's moral government, or announce the sanctions under which it is administered? For this, it will be necessary to read the free thoughts of his mind and the purposes of his sovereign will, as these are woven into the whole texture of history and providence; and which, from their very nature, can be known only as they are directly revealed. They lie in the depths of Jehovah's counsel, and it would require infinite intelligence to know them, formed as yet only in the secret resolve of his own heart. They are wrapped within the folds of his own consciousness; and who can bring them forth, save a being who has that consciousness and thinks those thoughts himself? It must be one who can lift up from the abysses of the divine nature the truths which are hid within those eternal deeps; and when thus disclosed, this revelation places us at the original fountain of knowledge. It is absolute truth we receive, since he who speaks is the ultimate source of all being and light. We only need to ascertain whether it be God's revelation, indeed, to dissipate every doubt in the certainty with which this knowledge is sealed upon the understanding.

We are thus brought back to the original statement, which the preceding paragraphs are intended simply to enforce—that it is *the official distinction of the Son to be the Revealer of the Deity.* He himself thus proclaims the fact: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (Matt. xi. 27.) So, again, in the testimony

heretofore recited: "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John i. 18.) For this reason, in the opening of the messages to the seven churches of Asia, in the Apocalypse, Christ is styled with emphasis "the faithful witness": and, again, "the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." (Rev. i. 5; iii. 14.) With especial solemnity the sacred canon closes with this last reference to the witness upon whose personal veracity rests the entire dogmatic authority of the Scriptures: "He which testifieth these things, saith, surely I come quickly." It is the pledge of his truthfulness, that he will appear again to judge the world according to the record which he has delivered. It is a sufficient basis for our faith, that by his word we are to be tried at the last day, which is now delivered to us upon his authority as the word of our salvation. And because from first to last it is the testimony of a witness, it is delivered through the gospels with the constant formula, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." Nor should it be forgotten that, when challenged by Pilate, in the very moment of his martyrdom he solemnly affirmed, "to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John xviii. 37); and this testimony he makes the foundation of the kingdom claimed by him as mediator. This Revealer could speak not only with the certainty of personal knowledge of the truth, but with the superadded authority of one whose office requires him to speak: the sanction of which, in turn, guarantees to us the verity of all that

he shall utter. It is his function to bring from its concealment what is hid within the Father's purpose and mind; and only he who could say "I and my Father are one," was equal to the disclosure.

Here a stupendous mystery confronts us. How shall this divine revelation be communicated to the creature? It is conceivable that it might be directly impressed upon the individual soul, and with such force of conviction as shall certify the truth to the receiver. This, however, would disorganize society, and shut up the worshipper to solitary communion with God. It would necessitate the endless repetition of the same communication to the units which compose each generation, and this indefinitely through all time. There would be no deposit of truth left in trust with the creature, the bond of fellowship in worship, and the pledge of fidelity to the Creator himself. The dialect of the Godhead would not be understood even by the highest order of finite beings; and the language of symbol would be incapable of interpretation to those of different physical organization throughout the realm of space. The problem is solved in the incarnation of the Son of God: "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, a body hast thou prepared me." (Heb. x. 5.) "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John i. 14.) The amazing sweep of this condescension is thus set forth in the Scriptures: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ser-

vant, and was made in the likeness of men." (Phil. ii. 6, 7.) In his swift descent down to man at the bottom of the scale, he gathers all the intervening grades in his embrace. He identifies himself with all the creatures, through his own assumption of creaturely existence. He is clothed with all their sympathies, affections and relations; and in human speech finds the creature-dialect in which to make a permanent record of his sublime disclosures. In our current religious thought, the incarnation of the Son is almost exclusively associated with the work of human redemption—the topic to be discussed in the next chapter, and therefore not anticipated in this. But it may be well to inquire whether both the incarnation and the redemption may not have a wider application to other orders of being besides man. If the Son, as "the Word," is eternally designated as the Revealer of God, it is surely an office which relates him to intelligent beings throughout the universe; and the assumption of human nature not only allies him with all finite intelligences, but affords the organ of communication with them through the ages of eternity.

It is easy to see how the prophetical office of Christ, as complementary to his priestly and kingly functions, shall yet be an offshoot or branch of this wider prerogative as the Revealer of God to all the creatures. Within the sphere of redemption itself, he makes the definite offer of salvation to the human race; whilst yet it falls within the larger function to make known "the exceeding riches of this grace" to beings who are holy. By virtue of his incarnation, he becomes the head of prophets under the old dispensa-

tion, and of apostles under the new. When by inspiration of the Spirit the completed revelation is reduced to record, he who is "the Word" is still seen among the golden candlesticks—holding in his right hand "the stars, which are the angels of the churches." (Rev. i. 13–20.)

A few sentences are now required, showing what influence this revelation through the Son should have on both the doctrine and duty of prayer.

(1.) *It is evident that the truth thus revealed furnishes the material of true prayer.* "We know not," says the apostle, "what we should pray for as we ought." How should we, unless some one teach us? Burdened with wants, bewildered with cares, oppressed with fears, distracted with perplexities and doubts, crushed under bereavement and sorrow, where shall we turn in these emergencies of life for succor or relief? Who will show us the way into the presence of "the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift"? We grope in the darkness, until we hear a voice from the divine oracle, saying, "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John xiv. 6.) Through this Revealer we learn the infinite depths of that Father's love, as well as the nature of the discipline by which he prepares us for inheritance in glory. From him we learn not timidly to approach the throne of power alone, but to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. iv. 16.) He suggests the arguments with which to plead our cause in the chancery above, teaching us how to hope in despondency, how to be patient under trial, how to

prevail in the very hour of defeat. Clearly it is "through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. ii. 18.)

(2.) *Prayer gathers confidence to itself from the entire certainty of the truth addressed to its faith.* The assurance is twofold. It is not derived at second hand, from one who has first to learn in order to teach. The Revealer is himself divine. His knowledge is, therefore, not only infinite in degree, but original in its source. It flows from the Revealer's self-consciousness, and is free from suspicion of error or confusion through its transmission from another. Then, further, the revelation is made under a commission received from the Father, which brings the Son under an official obligation. An additional guarantee is afforded through the seal of the Father's authority affixed to the responsible office of the Son. The truth thus not only affords the material from which the prayer is fashioned, but adds efficiency to the petitions from the confidence and importunity of faith with which they are urged.

(3.) *Consider the value of this revelation as delivered to us in the form of testimony.* The captious objection is often urged against Christianity, that it contains mysteries wholly beyond human comprehension. We would state it in even stronger terms, that the gospel actually founds upon the mysteries it contains: which thus affirms the divine origin of the system they are supposed to betray. Religion, in connecting us with God, lifts us into the region of the infinite, which, by the way, is no more incomprehensible in Christianity than it is in the science of mathematics, where it

passes without challenge from any source. The truths of revelation are, of necessity, transcendental. They raise their height above the stars, and lose themselves in the vastness of the eternal and divine; and the shadows which they cast upon the earth are deeper and darker than reason's flickering ray shall ever illumine. Yet these identical mysteries are received with unhesitating assurance upon the testimony of a divine witness, who embraces them all in the perfect knowledge of his own nature and being. The most inexplicable disclosures, such as that of the Trinity, of the incarnation, of fore-ordination, and the like, are accepted with as much assurance of their truth as the plainest fact of history or the most obvious principle in morals. Upon the veracity of a competent witness as the guarantee of our faith, the inexplicable is as easily received as the demonstrable.

The bearing of this upon the privilege of prayer lies on the face of the statement. If in our approach to the mercy-seat we must first reduce within the comprehension of finite reason these mysteries lifting their frowning height to heaven, we would kneel forever in hopeless despair of chasing their cold shadow from the soul. But in faith's acceptance of them as eternal verities, we mount as on the wings of an eagle to their summit; from which, in the clear sunlight beaming from above, we behold the heavenly city through whose gates of pearl we shall soon share in the glory of our King.

(4.) *The scheme of grace provides that divine truth shall be made effectual in the salvation of them that believe.* This anticipates what properly relates to the

office-work of the Holy Spirit, in which connection it will call for special treatment. But the suggestion cannot be withheld here, in considering what is involved in the nature of a divine revelation. It can hardly be supposed that such a system of truth would be left to the caprice and stubbornness of sinful men, to be contemptuously rejected by all. On the contrary, the Apostle Peter declares that "the word, which by the gospel is preached unto us," is "the incorruptible seed," of which the Christian is "born again." (1 Peter i. 23.) As a concealed life is developed from the seed buried in the earth, so the new life of the saint is wrought into the soul through the word of truth which makes known to him the great salvation. In the very fact of a divine revelation there lies a constructive pledge of its efficiency in all who truly receive it as the seed of the new birth. The faith of true prayer is stimulated thus to lay hold of the power by which all this is to be realized in the soul's experience; and through the Son, as the revealer, we draw very near to the Father in our supplications at the throne of his grace.

(5.) *Prayer is wonderfully enriched by the new discoveries of truth which this revelation unfolds.* He in whom "it pleaseth the Father that all fulness should dwell" has much to show the believer here on earth, as he grows "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Not only so, but in heaven itself he will continue to draw from the infinite depths which are in God; and the saint will forever step from knowledge to knowledge, from strength to strength, from blessedness to blessed-

ness, in the glory which is made his inheritance through the Son, as the revealer. Who that "bows the knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," in the clear hope of such a destiny, will not fill his prayer with ringing notes of praise and joy—swelling into the triumph with which he will at length cast his crown before the Lamb in heaven?

(6.) *Through the truth thus revealed, holy beings hold communion with each other and with God.* Prayer, as we saw in the outset of these discussions, is a social ordinance, designed to meet the necessities of our social, as well as our individual, nature. Thus we are taught, when we pray, to say "Our Father": and so the apostle exhorts that "supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men." (1 Tim. ii. 1.) It gives, perhaps, the most powerful leverage which can be contrived, for the overthrow of the selfishness so natural to the human heart. As this revelation by the Son is the joint possession of all the people of God, the truth which all receive becomes the bond of a universal fellowship. Alike on earth and in heaven, the saints are drawn nearer to each other by the same truth which brings them into closer communion with the eternal Father. The office of the Son stands, therefore, in most intimate relation to prayer; as furnishing the whole body of truth so necessary to all the intercourse of holy beings throughout the universe—whether with each other, or with their common Father above.

CHAPTER IV.

PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE OFFICE OF THE SON.—Continued.

THE revelation of God to the creature is but one of the four aspects in which we propose to consider the official work of the Son. We are brought now to the second of these:

II. THE REDEMPTION OF A LOST RACE BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF ON THE CROSS. In the introductory chapter upon "The Covenant of Grace" certain principles were announced on which it is based. These will need to be enlarged upon, in showing how the method of salvation has been accomplished. Under a dispensation of unchangeable law, it is easy to see how the good shall be rewarded; but on the supposition of transgression, how shall the wicked be saved? The difficulty is twofold, as it respects the divine office and the divine character. How shall God, as the lawgiver, dispense with the penalty which the sinner has incurred? And how shall God, in his holiness, have any commerce with the impure? Various theories have been projected in solution of this double problem:

(1.) It has been suggested that, *in the exercise of mere sovereignty, God may remit the penalty and grant a general amnesty to transgressors.* The plea is singularly fallacious; for it assumes that a being who is supreme is under no obligation of any kind, and may be as arbitrary and capricious as he pleases. But

there is a maxim, even amongst men, that "*Noblesse oblige*": the higher one's station, the stronger is the obligation to act worthily of it. He may be amenable to no higher authority: all the more is he under obligation to be true to himself. If, then, Jehovah is infinitely perfect in his own nature, by virtue of his very supremacy does he become a law to himself. He will freely, without necessity or constraint, act under the prompting of his own glorious attributes. If, too, the distinction between right and wrong be an eternal distinction, grounded in the nature of God as an infinitely holy being, then it is inconceivable that the Divine Ruler shall ever do anything to the creature but that which is intrinsically right. He cannot be supposed to reverse that which the law of his own nature has established forever. Thus the argument drawn from the naked supremacy of God is cut away at its root.

Again, the theory implies that which is impossible under a perfect government, such as that of Jehovah. The reasoning founds upon an analogy from human governments; if these, confessedly imperfect, may remit punishment, how much more may God in his absolute supremacy, being responsible to no power higher than his own? Observe, however, that the pardoning power vested in the executive is a plain acknowledgment of defect; the analogy cannot therefore carry to the divine government, which is perfect. The vagueness and generality of human laws render it impossible to provide for every case which may arise under their administration; nor can they accurately distinguish between the shades of guilt in similar

offences. To meet this difficulty, a dispensing power is granted to the executive, in certain cases, to set aside a judicial decision, and thus to release the criminal from punishment. It is a necessary, though awkward, arrangement to meet the imperfections of earthly legislation; in which law, through its very hardness, operates injustice, and oppresses where it was designed to protect. But if, in a given case, it could be shown that the law was framed expressly to meet it, there could be no suspension of the penalty without the entire overthrow of justice, and the direct subversion of authority. What is here supposed is exactly true of the divine government. The omniscience of the Lawgiver stretched through all the ages, foresaw every contingency that could possibly arise, and tracked the operation of the statute in every case to which it could apply. The reason thus does not exist for the interposition of executive clemency, as in an earthly kingdom; and the analogy fails between the two.

It should be noted further, that a collision never occurs between the judicial and executive departments without a jar which threatens the security of all government amongst men. It is intuitively perceived that the findings of the courts cannot be frequently and loosely set aside without disjointing society and shaking the whole fabric of government into ruin. Can this be supposed, for a moment, in the administration of Jehovah? And is it not fallacious to run such an imperfection from the human kingdoms into the divine? The theory is a calumny, which postulates such a collision in the wise and perfect government of the Most High.

(2.) It is argued by others, that *God may pardon the sinner upon his bare repentance.* What if it should turn out that there can be no repentance anterior to the pardon which it is supposed to procure? The sentence under which the sinner is condemned is that of spiritual death, which involves the loss of all desire after the enjoyment of fellowship with God. How, then, shall the sinner put forth this act of spiritual life which repentance implies? The contradiction is too obvious to be overlooked. In the divine plan it is in the application of the pardon the Holy Ghost infuses the spiritual life, whose instinctive movement is faith in Christ and repentance toward God. The language of God to the transgressor is this: "Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities," but immediately adds, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." (Isa. xliii. 24, 25.) The pardon is graciously bestowed, in which God puts away our sins from us: and in sealing this pardon on the conscience by his Spirit, he gives the repentance with which we also are enabled to put away these sins, "with grief and hatred" of the same: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts v. 31.)

But passing this by without further expansion, let it be remembered that repentance is not atonement. It does not cancel past guilt, but rather affirms it. Instead of bleaching the sin, it is rather the dye which sets the dismal color fast. The trespass once committed, remains an act performed. It is a part of

history which stands upon the record, and what is to be done with it? Suppose the sinner ever so penitent, and ever so competent to abstain from its commission in the future, yet there it stands an accomplished deed of which some disposal must be made. When the penitent acknowledges before God that he has sinned and deserves to suffer the penalty of the violated law, is this not as true after the confession as before? Can a true statement be made untrue as soon as it is uttered? In the scheme of grace, as we shall presently see, something thoroughly satisfactory to justice is done with the sin, which is yet pardoned. But the theory before us leaves the sinner in possession of the sin which he confesses, challenging the divine justice which condemns it, and the divine truth which affirms it shall be punished. Evidently this hypothesis goes to pieces under the double difficulty which presses upon it.

(3.) It is surmised again, that *God may inflict the penalty in part, either in the sufferings of this life, or of purgatory in the world to come.* This is the essence of what is known as the theory of universalism. Two replies instantly occur, both of which require to be silenced. The first exposes it as a different penalty from that which God originally appointed as the sanction of his law. The punishment which the law in the beginning threatened against transgression was *death:* "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" and this death must be eternal, unless God interpose the power of his grace to lift us up to life again. By what authority does man undertake to substitute an enactment of his own in place of that which Jehovah has solemnly or-

dained? Or, if it be alleged that the change is made by the Lawgiver himself, how shall this comport with that immutability of purpose and of character which we have been compelled to ascribe to him? And what vindication is there of justice, when the penalty is thus reduced after it has been incurred? At this juncture, the surrender of the penalty is subversive of law; and this is nothing less than the overthrow of all government, and the removal of all protection and security to the creature.

The second reply is, that the enormity of an offence is not measured by the capacity of the transgressor, be it more or less, but by the magnitude of the interests to be protected. The principle may be profusely illustrated, if it were necessary to establish what scarcely any one would venture to question. Life is a most precious gift of God to man; it is, therefore, held a sacred trust, and murder is a crime visited with the highest penalty of human law. In like manner, treason strikes at the majesty of the state, and with a single blow destroys all the complex interests of society. It, therefore, passes under the heaviest human censure, as the gravest of public crimes. But sin is an offence against all the interests of the universe and of God. Its enormity is to be measured only by the infinite perfections of Jehovah, against which it is levelled, as well as by the majesty of that blessed law which is the adequate interpretation of these. It is a gross error to estimate its guilt by the finite strength of the sinner. The attempt which is made upon the life of the divine holiness itself is none the less base because the powerless shaft falls below the throne

upon which Jehovah sits. The punishment of such a crime as this treason against the majesty of the Godhead must be proportioned to its aggravation, which, in the case of finite beings, must be eternal in its duration.

If reason, on the one hand, can find no way of rescue for the sinner under the condemnation of the law, so, on the other hand, can nature make no provision for cleansing the defiled. This, however, is a difficulty which must be surmounted. How can a being of immaculate purity hold communion with a polluted sinner? How can the Lawgiver look upon that sinner with displeasure after he has been pardoned? How can God, possessing a moral nature, be indifferent? These interrogatories, with the dilemma which they involve, draw the meshes of the argument too close to admit escape. God must either love, or hate, or be indifferent; yet not one of the three can obtain upon the theory of a partial infliction and a partial remission of the original penalty. The infliction, as far as it goes, compels the admission of its justice; while the remission, as far as it may reach, confesses that justice has been wronged in the pretermission. Both unite in the condemnation of this hypothesis, as of those already considered.

By the exhaustion of suppositions we are shut up to the conclusion that there is no deliverance for the sinner provided in the violated law. Law, as such, knows nothing of pardon; it recognizes only obedience or punishment. The incorporation within it of the principle of mercy would operate its dissolution, and render it useless as a regulative standard. It is,

therefore, of pure grace when God proposes to man the pardon of sin; and the method of that grace must be to meet, on the sinner's behalf, all the requirements of justice and of law. These, inexorable in their demands, must both be satisfied: the former, in exhausting the penalty; the latter, in rendering perfect obedience to the precept. Obviously, neither of these can be undertaken by the sinner himself. He is already under the curse, and cannot, therefore, remove it; he has already broken the commandment, and cannot, therefore, restore it by the righteousness required. Plainly, the task can be achieved only by a substitute, such as the law will accept, and who is competent to stand in the sinner's place and fulfil his original obligations.

In this substitute three conditions must meet: (1), He must have power over his own life, both to lay it down and to take it again; (2), He must be above law, so as to owe no obedience for himself; (3), He must possess infinite resources to meet the exactions of infinite justice. In no created being can these requisites be found. The life of the creature is a gift assigned in trust to be preserved, and cannot be resumed when once laid aside. Every creature is under law for himself, owing obedience up to the extent of his own powers, which excludes him from taking another's place under the law. No finite being possesses the resources to deal with an infinite problem. We must ascend above all grades of being in heaven itself, and enter within the pavilion of the Godhead, before we shall find him who is capable of discharging the sinner's obligations. He who occupies the middle seat upon

the eternal throne can alone answer the Father's challenge, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." (Psalm xl. 7, 8.) He can fulfil each of the conditions named above. As to the first, he says with emphasis, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John x. 17, 18.) As to the second, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) Thus we may be justified before God without introducing the vicious principle of supererogation, which is subversive of all responsibility, and, therefore, of all morality. As to the third, it is written of him, that he, "Being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 6–8.) Here, then, is the substitute found, having all the requisites for the work of human redemption, who is duly commissioned by the Father, as testified often by declarations from the Son's own lips, to which may be added the explicit deposition made by the Apostle John, "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." (1 John iv. 14.)

But this redemption consists in the endurance of the curse, and how shall the divine suffer and die? Nay, more, how shall the great contradiction be compassed, of bringing him under the jurisdiction of the law who is supreme over it, and from whose nature, as their fountain and source, issue its eternal distinctions of right and wrong, recognized by the human conscience? These interrogatories plunge us into the mystery of the incarnation, "the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." (1 Timothy iii. 16.) Behold the power which brings together, in the person of Jesus Christ, the divine and the human; that which is above law to glorify, and that which is under law to obey; that which can protect the interests of heaven, and that which can represent the wants of earth; that which can assert the prerogative of mercy, and that which can meet the exactions of justice. View the stretch of omnipotence over the whole compass of being, and the bringing together of its two opposite poles; being infinite, uncaused, eternal, as it is in God, and being finite, conditioned, created, as it is in man.

Even this, however, does not reach to the core of the mystery. The humanity of Christ might have been created precisely as that of Adam in the beginning. But this would not have placed him in relation with our race; nor would the right of redemption be vested in one so totally a stranger to our blood. This substitute must not only be a man, but one of the class whom he comes to redeem. He must not only be *created*, he must be *born* a man. Yet how shall he be brought under this law of descent, and escape the terrible inheritance of sin which comes by derivation to all others

of the race? Behold, then, another manifestation of power in the supernatural conception in the womb of a virgin, estopping the entail of sin by making him only "the seed of the woman." "And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i. 35, compared with Gen. iii. 15.) The substitute is thus equipped with a perfectly sinless human nature, the reality of which is constantly affirmed in the Scriptures: "The Word was made flesh," says John (chap. i. 14). "Forasmuch," says Paul, "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." (Heb. ii. 14.) In this human nature he can bear the sinner's guilt, and die the sinner's death; whilst yet the glory of his divinity can fill his obedience with inconceivable lustre, and impart to his work of sacrifice an infinite merit.

The final question then remains, did this substitute thus equipped come actually under the curse, thereby accomplishing our redemption? On this point the testimony of the divine oracles is equally full and explicit. Isaiah, seven centuries before the advent of the Messiah, thus anticipates in prophecy: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." (Isa. liii. 5.) "We have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Vs. 6.) "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offer-

ing for sin, he shall see his seed." (Vs. 10.) "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." (Vs. 11.) So in the New Testament: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) Also in Gal. iii. 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Again, in 1 Pet. ii. 24, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

Nor was it only physical suffering and death which he endured in the body alone. The intense language in which his distress is described could only be employed of the anguish of the soul—such as the Sinless One must experience in bearing the weight of human guilt: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels." (Ps. xxii. 14.) "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." (Psa. lxix. 1, 2, 20.) Such is the pathetic strain in which prophecy anticipates his sorrow; nor is that of history less sad in depicting its fulfilment. The apostle speaks of "the strong crying and tears, with which he offered prayers and supplications unto him that was able to save him from death." (Heb. v. 7.) The

evangelist records the anguish of Gethsemane, "when his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke xxii. 44.) Not less significant was the great horror of darkness at the crucifixion; nor the bitter wail, "my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Luke xxiii. 44, 46.) It is needless to multiply citations further; for language cannot more explicitly set forth the penal character of Christ's sufferings: nor is it easy to see in what sense he could be a proper substitute for the guilty, unless he actually sustained the curse beneath which they lay condemned.

Here an interesting inquiry presents itself. If the value of Christ's death resides in the fact that it satisfied the penalty of the law, why is not this death viewed simply in its *legal* aspect? Why is it described as a *sacrifice;* and Christ himself, not only a substitute, but also a *priest?* Two testimonies, taken almost at sight, will suffice for this statement: "But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." (Heb. ix. 11, 12.) Again, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." (Heb. x. 12.) It will greatly enhance our conception of the intrinsic worth of Christ's death, if we can trace the reasons for it as a priestly sacrifice. We venture the following suggestions:

First, The exercise of the priestly function estab-

lishes firmly the voluntariness of Christ's death. However this may have been exacted of him under the law, it was none the less freely proffered by himself; for the law can accept no substitute who does not of his own will assume the office. The obedience of Christ was thus not only voluntary, in the sense that all obedience must be the homage of the will, but it was an obedience volunteered by one who was under no antecedent obligation to render it. This fundamental feature in the death of Christ as the free act of his own will, is signalized by his consecration as a priest. Under the symbol of the old economy, the victim could not offer itself; this required the intervention of a priest. But Christ, in his twofold nature, could be alike the priest and the sacrifice: thus showing that, in taking the sinner's place, he tenders his own life to the law. It was not taken from him; but he "laid it down of himself," as he expressly declares. Nor could this be more distinctly emphasized than by constituting him a priest, to offer himself a sacrifice for sin.

Second, From the moment of the fall no approach could be made to God but through animal sacrifice: yet "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (Heb. x. 4.) These were only types of Christ, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) And now, to lay the type and the anti-type side by side, he is made a priest, and his death a sacrifice. Only through him, as the one perfect sacrifice for sin, was the sinner ever permitted access into God's presence. The method of grace is thus seen to run through all

the dispensations, Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian alike, until the end of time. In no other way could uniformity of Scripture teaching be preserved, except by continuing the priesthood of the Old Testament in the priesthood of the New; in which "by one offering Christ hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.)

Third, Christ Jesus is ordained a priest, that he may manage all the interests committed to his trust as "the one mediator between God and men." (1 Tim. ii. 5.) If the efficacy of his death terminated in the procurement of pardon for the sinner, by the substitution of one life for another life under the law, then it might be restricted to its legal aspect alone. But when it is remembered that vast changes hinge upon it, not simply in the character and destiny of the individual soul, but in the history of whole orders of intelligent beings through eternity, a deeper significance attaches to it. The Mediator, whose first act was to redeem the sinner's forfeited life, finds himself charged with solemn and varied offices in the management of his assumed trust. What these other mediatorial functions are, will occupy attention in succeeding chapters, and may not be anticipated in this. To indicate this continued mediatorship of Christ in all that concerns the glory of God and the salvation of men, he is invested with an unchangeable priesthood. It is declared to be the sole function of a priest to intervene for men in the worship offered to God: "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." (Heb. v. 1.)

Fourth, Sacrifice is always an act of worship. Our Lord thus teaches that in obedience is to be found the essence of all true worship. If the original revelation was made through the law as the transcript of the divine character, then to every holy being it will be the medium of intercourse with the Deity: and obedience will transform itself into the homage of the heart. The highest view of obedience is not, indeed, as a congeries of independent acts calling for a separate energy, but the spontaneous outgiving of the virtue and holiness of the creature, just as the essence and life of the flower is exhaled in the fragrance. Thus obedience becomes the constant worship of the soul towards God; and in his own sacrificial offering our High Priest teaches us the true nature of all worship in perfect obedience to our Father's will, leading us in this worship, not only in this life, but in the higher worship of heaven hereafter.

The vital connection of this redemption with the office of prayer flashes upon us without the need of formal exposition. Nevertheless, for the sake of completeness, let the following details be considered:

In the first place, *only through this redemption is restored man's forfeited right of approach to God.* If, under the pressure of guilt or of suffering, the sinner would cry out for relief, his tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth in the despair of being heard. Shut out from the divine recognition as a suppliant, the voice of prayer is silenced in its first utterance. To illustrate: In the case of a criminal sentenced to die under human law, every right to liberty and life has been forfeited. There may be delay in the execution of the

sentence, partly to show that there is no vindictiveness in the processes of justice, and partly to allow the unhappy sufferer opportunity to prepare for his destiny. Still, bound fast within prison-walls, the law holds in its remorseless grasp the life which, through transgression, has been forfeited to it. Such is the sinner's condition in this world—under reprieve only until the fixed hour of execution shall arrive. Under such conditions prayer is stifled into a sob of mute despair.

But in the scheme of grace, as we have seen, the penalty has been borne by the sinner's substitute. He has been redeemed from the curse, and, no longer under condemnation, his forfeited right to approach God is restored. This full and free pardon opens the lips which have been sealed, and prayer once more breathes its trustful accents into the ear of the reconciled Father. The privilege of prayer comes to us only through this redemption by the Son: "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." (John x. 9.) "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John xiv. 6.) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." (John xvi. 23.)

In the second place, *the word of the Redeemer furnishes the argument to be used in prayer.* The confession of the penitent always is, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." (Titus iii. 5.) And so David prays, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." (Psalm

li. 1.) Again, "Do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me." (Psalm cix. 21.) In like manner Daniel testifies, "We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies." (Dan. ix. 18.) So in the New Testament the publican in the temple smote upon his breast, and simply said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke xviii. 13.) And the apostle declares, "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Cor. i. 20.) Thus the believer not only comes to the Father through the Son, but pleads with the Father by the Son, and by what the Son hath wrought; all of which is embodied in our Lord's declaration, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John xiv. 13.)

In the third place, *in the work of redemption is laid the ground of peace to the sinner's conscience, and of security in the believer's seasons of trial and conflict.* The object of prayer is to bring the estranged soul again into favor and fellowship with God. But prayer must be orderly and intelligent; its petitions are not the howling of the wind in a tempest, nor the cry of a wild beast in hunger and pain. It is the address of an intelligent soul to the "Father of spirits"; it must, therefore, know the pleas by which to prevail. If under the torture of an accusing conscience the sinner should sue for peace with God, upon what ground may it be confidently implored? The Scriptures return the answer, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus

Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. v. 1, 2.) The prayer is irrational that does not recognize the condition on which God proposes to be reconciled to the sinner; and if this be the acceptance of Christ's atoning sacrifice, this will be the ground on which prayer will plant itself in expectation of the answer: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." (Isa. xxvi. 3.)

Equally so, those who have been "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ" will find their safety in the care of him who "knows his sheep," and who declares "they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John x. 28.) What vigor must the assurance give to prayer, if those "begotten unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead" are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"! (1 Pet. i. 5.)

In the fourth place, *upon Christ, the redeemer, depends the believer's progress in holiness on earth, and his hope of heaven hereafter.* The apostle exhorts: "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. iii. 18); the two terms being indissolubly connected by the logic of grace. The divine promise which assures our sanctification through Christ, is in these words: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 6.) The doctrinal statement of the same truth may be gathered from passages such

as these: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 2.) "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) Again, in 1 Cor. vi. 11: "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." A still more terse testimony, as to the connection of holiness and atonement, is given in 1 John i. 7: "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

In like manner, the heavenly inheritance is the purchase of the Saviour's death. These are his words: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." (John xvii. 24.) "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 3.) "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor." (John xii. 26.) These testimonies are cited without comment—the more impressive when read in their own solemn grandeur. If, then, in prayer the believer is stretching out his desires after closer fellowship with God, and the more blissful joys of heaven, how is that prayer both stimulated and directed by knowing the source from which these blessings spring, and the price by which they have been secured!

CHAPTER V.

PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE SON.—Continued.

WE have traced one branch of Christ's priestly work in offering himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people. The other and coördinate priestly function constitutes the third aspect in which his work is to be viewed, namely:

III. His Intercessory Pleading in the Court of his Father above. "It is expedient for you that I go away," said our Lord to his disciples in the hour of their sorrow. The ground of this necessity should command our attention, as it opens up other and important features of his mediatorial work.

1. *The life of Jesus, after the resurrection, was held upon a tenure by which it could not be subject to the conditions of a state of probation and of trial.* When he came from the bosom of his Father, he appeared as the sinner's representative. As such, he is brought under the law, and subjects himself to that condition of trial—nay, rather of condemnation—under which the principal is found. Putatively a sinner, because he undertook for sinners, he goes under the pressure of the curse, and, therefore, of all the infirmities and evils which afflict the lot of those who are under the condemnation of the law. But the moment he rose from the dead under the Father's acquittal, it is impossible that his life shall be held under the same tenure as before. His resurrection-life is assured by

the law, whose claims have been completely satisfied. Upon this ground it distinctly guarantees to him the unassailed possession and enjoyment of this life, never to be subject to change, but always to be held by him on the title of a legal right, which the law itself formally and judicially affirms. See how Paul expresses it: "Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him: for in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." (Rom. vi. 9, 10.) And if by the mouth of two witnesses a truth must be established, hear the voice of Peter speaking in the streets of Jerusalem: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (Acts ii. 24.) The moment the decree from the Father's lips pronounced his acquittal from the condemnation under which he died, that acquittal unlocked the chains by which he was bound under the curse, and there was a moral necessity for his resurrection.

Accordingly, we are struck, in the evangelic history, with certain marked differences between the conditions of Christ's life and body before and after the resurrection. When he stood in Mary's presence, to whom the first manifestation was made, as she was about reverently to embrace him, he says, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." (John xx. 17.) During the forty days of his continuance on earth, however the glory of his risen body may have been obscured, yet a peculiar sanctity

was thrown around his person. He abstains from the old familiar intercourse with his disciples, and only appears on each eighth day when they were assembled to engage in the worship of God. With emphasis it is said, again and again, of these Sabbath services and of Christ's approach, that when they were within, and "the doors were shut," Christ suddenly appeared in the midst of them. All through those forty days, and conspicuously on the day when his sacred feet pressed the Mount of Olives, and he ascended visibly in the sight of his disciples, that risen body of our Lord exhibited other properties than those of gross matter, and seemed exempt from the laws by which material bodies are controlled. If, then, Christ, after his resurrection, has a life which is held under a different tenure than before; if he has a body exempt from the conditions and restraints which are imposed upon ours, would it not be anomalous for him to survive on the earth, commingling a state of trial with a state of reward, and subjecting that peculiar life and that risen body to conditions from which both are released by the new tenure on which both are held? On this ground there was a real necessity for our Lord's disappearance from the earth, and his entrance bodily into glory.

2. *This departure was required as the proof that his work of sacrifice was finished; incapable therefore either of being supplemented or repeated.* It was for this work of sacrifice he became incarnate, as we have already seen. But when it is finished, as he declared on the cross, how shall he remain any longer upon the earth? For the same reason that we depart when our work is

done, must he also go into the presence of his Father; not simply to enjoy the promised reward, but that, in his bodily absence from the earth, the church throughout the ages may have public and formal testimony that his sacrifice was complete. Through all previous history, both among Jews and among the heathen, the repetition of sacrifices was just as familiar to the mind as the sacrifices themselves. There was not a people on the globe which had not their altars and priests and sacrifices; and there was not a religion, Jewish or heathen, in which the incompetency of these sacrifices to take away sin did not compel their constant repetition. Now, should the Lord Jesus Christ remain on earth, where would be the evidence that his offering was a perfect sacrifice, complete in itself, incapable of addition or of repetition? But the instant the whole is withdrawn, and neither victim, nor priest, nor altar remains to be seen, the demonstration is conclusive, in the very withdrawal of the service, of the completeness of the sacrifice which he had offered on the cross.

3. *Christ's translation to heaven proved the Father's acceptance of the atonement, thereby authenticating it to our faith.* Faith in Christ implies the acceptance of his person, as well as trust in his work. It is defined in our Standards to be "a saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel." It is therefore more than simple belief. It is the actual reception into our hearts of the personal Christ, and it is the actual repose of the soul upon his finished work. But then faith is not credulity; it must have a warrant for its exercise.

Above all other facts must this be authenticated to the faith of the church, when Christ offers the sacrifice of himself as an atonement for the sins of the world. How then shall this authentication be made? Obviously by the resurrection and ascension of Christ, as these two belong together, the two sides of the same truth. The penalty being inflicted judicially upon him by the Father as the administrator of law, he can rise from the dead only through a judicial acquittal. Reference is not had here to the power necessary to achieve the resurrection, but simply to the ground on which it shall rest; and this is, that in dying Christ exhausted the penalty, and rose therefore from the tomb by a righteous and legal necessity. In going into the grave, he carried our sins there; in his resurrection, he left them there, no more to be charged as the ground of his condemnation or our own. He could not have risen from the tomb with the sins he carried there. If those sins yet attach to him, they have power to detain him in the grave.

The resurrection, therefore, is the public and crowning proof of the efficiency of his death in expiating the sins of his people, and of his complete absolution from the curse of the law. When he rose and ascended into the presence of his Father, he rose and ascended without sin. It is significant of this that, in the promise of our Lord's second coming, it is said, "He shall appear without sin unto salvation." (Heb. ix. 28.) He must come from heaven without sin, because in his ascension to his Father he went up without sin; and without sin he sits on the Father's right hand in glory. Thus does our Lord's departure attest the official ac-

ceptance of his work, and authenticate it as the ground of our salvation.

4. *Christ's removal from earth becomes the pledge of our sanctification; teaching that sin is to be taken away from the believer as to its being no less than its guilt.* There must be in the scheme of grace, as completed, the abolishment of sin in the individual Christian and in the collective church; so that at least it shall have no existence anywhere, save in that world of despair in which it is imprisoned by God's justice forever. Hence John, in the close of the Apocalypse, tells us that "death and hell were cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death." (Rev. xx. 14.) And Peter, seeing in prophetic vision the heavens rolled together as a scroll, and the elements melting with fervent heat, declares: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Pet. iii. 13.) Let us take no scant view of the proportions of the Redeemer's work. Its final aim is not only to deliver the individual Christian from the condemnation, dominion, and at last from the being of sin, but to purge the universal church, so that through all the ages it shall never come into contact with the presence and defilement of sin. Only in hell, where reigns in awful gloom the second death, shall sin evermore be known in the universe of God.

Under the old dispensation, this removal of sin was symbolized in various forms. In consuming the burnt-offering by fire to the last hair, the very sin was consumed with the victim, never afterwards to come from its ashes to accuse and condemn the believer. Also when the high priest confessed the sins of Israel upon

the head of the scape-goat; it was driven into the wilderness, and there left—teaching that the sins which are laid upon Christ are borne away where they shall never afterwards be charged against his people. How shall this fact, so conspicuously illustrated under the symbols of the old economy, be adumbrated under the new? Simply by the withdrawal of him upon whom the sins were laid. The Lord Jesus rises from the tomb, and the eyes of the church follow him in his immortal ascension; evincing to his people that they, in their ascension by the same path, shall leave their sin behind, and be delivered from the dominion, presence, and being of that which was their torment on earth.

5. *Christ must needs go to heaven as the representative of his people, in their name and on their behalf to take possession of their home.* "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 2, 3.) In all these high transactions our Lord acted as a public person. When he hung upon the tree he represented his people, bearing their sins in his own body. When he went down into the grave he went as the representative and head of his people, carrying their sins which he had expiated on the cross, that he might leave them in the silence and forgetfulness of the tomb. And when he rose from the dead, according to the testimony of Paul he was "the first-fruits of them that slept." (1 Cor. xv. 20.) When he ascended into heaven he went to their

Father as well as to his Father, to their God as well as to his God, that amongst his Father's many mansions he might prepare the place intended for each of his redeemed. Hence Paul says (Hebrews vi. 20), "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Thus does our Lord, by his ascension, make sharp the distinction between this present life of service, toil and discipline, and the life to come as one of reward and glory.

The special reason assigned by our Lord for his departure, the sending of "the Comforter," is pretermitted in this enumeration, to avoid anticipating what must be fully treated under the work of the Spirit. For the same reason no reference is made here to the kingly office of the Son, which will form the subject of the next chapter. The remainder of this will be devoted to the intercessory work of Christ as discharged in heaven. The whole procedure in the sinner's justification is forensic. He is found guilty, and is judicially condemned, after due legal investigation. The penalty which has been borne by his substitute must be ascertained as meeting all the requirements of justice. And finally this perfect satisfaction must be pleaded in the court having jurisdiction, before it can be judicially set over to the sinner's account. This intercessory function pertains to our High Priest, grounded upon the sacrifice which has been offered for the sins of his people. "Wherefore," says the apostle, "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. vii. 25.)

It was to disclose this essential part of our Lord's redemptive work, that among the symbols of the Old Testament "the high priest went alone once every year into the tabernacle, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people." (Heb. ix. 7.) So, in fulfilment of the type, it is written: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. ix. 24.)

In appreciating the efficacy of this intercession let us consider:

1. *That it is the pleading of one who, as the Son of God, is omniscient.* "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. iv. 13.) He knows the law, by simply knowing himself; every attribute of the Deity being stamped upon precept and sanction alike. It was the original disclosure of the divine will, and therefore of the divine character; and it remains the unchanging basis of all revelations to be made in time and eternity. Our Lord thus has the measure in himself, to determine whether in his sinless obedience he fulfilled all that is contained in the precept; and whether in his atoning death he endured all that is involved in the penalty. Not only so: by the instinct of his infinite holiness, if the expression may be allowed, he must recognize the enormity of sin, and recoil from it with an infinite abhorrence. If, then, with this reciprocal and infallible knowledge he assumes the office of intercessor, he will know the pleas by which he will infallibly prevail.

2. *The intercessor is one of the contracting parties in*

the covenant of grace. The force of this cannot be overestimated. He knows precisely the obligations he assumed, and how these were understood by the Father who imposed them. No disagreement can therefore arise as to the terms therein definitely settled. If the question shall embarrass the course of the pleading, whether these terms have been fulfilled, this also is determined by the appearance of the advocate in presence of the court. His resurrection and ascension, as has already been shown, were intended as public proof of the Father's acceptance of the Mediator's work in fulfilling the conditions of the compact between them. The integrity of the judge assures the issuance of the final decree, in accordance with the pleadings in the case. The only question at all open respects the individuals on whose behalf the intercessor shall intervene. Here again, as an original party to the covenant, he perfectly knows who were given to him in that instrument, and for whom he has made himself responsible: besides which, there is the "Book of Life" in which their names are written. (Rev. xiii. 8.) Hence, in that priestly prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel, our Lord explicitly appeals to the terms of agreement in the counsels of the Godhead: "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. . . . . I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. . . . . Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. . . . . Neither pray I for these

alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." (John xvii. 6, 9, 11, 20.) How then shall the intercession fail, when the terms of the covenant are pleaded between the parties to the same; and which have been already adjudged to be fulfilled, precisely for those whose names are borne upon the breastplate of the high priest.

3. *He who conducts the intercession is the same that offered the sacrifice.* "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." (Rev. v. 6.) The priest and the sacrifice are both in one before the great tribunal. Not only as the Son, and a party to the covenant, is our Lord fitted to plead before the Father; but his human experience of suffering as the sacrifice lends a special pathos and power to his advocacy. In both natures alike is he singularly competent to manage the argument of his death, as the substitute for his people; showing alike the fact of his intervention, and the reality of the anguish which he endured under the law on their behalf. In this pleading for them, his human sympathy will embrace them all; intensifying the desire of his soul to instate each of his vast constituency in the privileges purchased by his blood. In every view of the case, not a single flaw can be discovered, either in the competency of the advocate, or in the character of his pleading at the bar of infinite justice.

4. *Through these intercessions our Lord obtains possession of his mediatorial reward.* As in the covenant

of grace the Son assumed immense responsibilities, so there was assured to him a corresponding reward. The service rendered and the recompense bestowed are consequent, the one upon the other. Thus in the forty-fifth Psalm (vs. 6, 7): "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Also in Isaiah liii. 12: "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the trangressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." The same connection of service and reward is declared in the New Testament. In Philippians ii. 9, after a graphic description of our Lord's humiliation, Paul concludes, "Wherefore also God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Again, in Hebrews xii. 2, "Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

This reward consists, first, manifestly in the glory shed upon his person as Mediator, as set over against the humiliation of the incarnation—the glory of his divinity shining through the human tabernacle, as on the Mount of Transfiguration. Hence the opening words in his priestly prayer: "Father, . . . glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. . . . I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John xvii. 1, 4.) In a new sense his glory will there be

seen, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." (John i. 14.) Secondly, this reward is realized in his exaltation above all creatures, and his mediatorial dominion over them, as declared in Ephesians i. 20, 21: "Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Thirdly, this reward consists in the redeemed, who become his by a vital union, and over whom he is constituted the head forever: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." (John vi. 37.) "I pray for them . . . which thou hast given me, for they are thine: and all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." (John xvii. 9, 10.) These are styled "his seed" (Isaiah liii. 10); also, the members of his body: "Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 22, 23.) By reason of this intimate relation, they are represented as sharing in the exaltation of their glorified Head: "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them," he himself declares. Again, he says, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke xxii. 28–30.)

Evidently, then, the Redeemer has a personal interest in the saints for whom he intercedes. He must sue out their claim to the blessings of salvation; and

only as he prevails in his petitions can he possess his purchased reward, or the great cloud of witnesses be gathered before the throne testifying to the riches of divine grace, as described in the fifth and seventh chapters of the Apocalypse.

This brief sketch of our Lord's intercessory office will be illuminated by the following extract from Halyburton's *Inquiry into the Nature of Regeneration and Justification*, which so vividly sets forth the judicial character of the whole procedure:

"When the term prefixed for the actual outgiving of privileges draws on, it is so ordered that the elect soul is summoned, at the instance of the justice and law of God, for his violation of the law. The charge is enforced on his conscience; God, in the Word's discoveries of him, through the Spirit's influence joining with the Word, is sisted as Judge. His presence, majesty, justice, and holiness are realized to the sinner, and he stands now in this lower court, at God's tribunal erected there. He is beat from denials, pleas, extenuations, shifts, or evasions that he can devise; whereon he stands at this lower tribunal before God, self-convicted, and with his mouth stopped.

"If any sentence should pass while matters stand thus, it must unavoidably be a sentence of condemnation. The charge is proved, the libel is relevant, all pleas made are repelled justly, nay, passed from by the panel. But the term being now come, the faithful Advocate, that will lose none of his, steps in, appears in the higher house, where he is entered with his own blood, and puts in his claim on behalf of the criminal arraigned before God's tribunal below, to this pur-

pose, though not in such words; if in words at all, I inquire not: 'This poor criminal was thine by creation, thy prisoner by his rebellion; but thou gavest him to me. I bore the curse of the law, due to his sins, for him; behold my wounds! I purchased all saving blessings; lo, there is my blood, the price of redemption! The term is come. I crave, therefore, that, in consideration of what I have done and suffered, he be acquitted, purchased grace given out to enable him to put in his claim at the bar, where he now stands personally convicted; and, finally, that thereon he be absolved, accepted, and entered to orderly possession of all purchased privileges.' Christ's appearance in the holiest for us must be allowed to import no less by any who own the orthodox doctrine as to Christ's oblation and intercession, and their mutual relation.

"This plea being made above, on behalf of the sinner convicted at God's tribunal below, is admitted; and the admision of it, in what manner soever it is done, imports, (1), A reckoning of Christ to the criminal, or an acknowledgment that his undertaking respected this sinner, now pursued by the law of God before God's tribunal on earth. (2), An acknowledgment of the dueness, or, to speak more properly, an acknowledgment that absolution is of right due on account of satisfaction made, and all other privileges on account of the price paid. (3), In consideration of the one and the other, order is, as it were, given out (I speak after our manner of conceiving and expressing what is above our reach) for the actual putting the sinner in possession of these advantages respectively."

Prayer is as intimately related to the intercession as to the sacrifice of Christ. We are accustomed to seek, in Christ's name alone, the pardon of sin or the continuance of God's favor. Yet who does not feel his inability to urge all that is involved in such a plea? How can a soul burdened with a sense of unworthiness, often clouded with doubts and fears, frequently baffled in rallying its scattered faculties—how can such a soul fill out the formula, "for Christ's sake," with which every prayer concludes? Then it is we lean upon the intercession of our High Priest, who has passed into the heavens. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John ii. 1.) With a sense of triumphant relief we carry the plea which we cannot utter to him who, being both priest and sacrifice, can rise to the height of the great argument and thus prevail for us. This puts nerve into prayer: that it passes through the Intercessor, and is covered with his endorsement, before it is laid before the throne. The full value of the sacrifice is pleaded on our behalf, in which all the conditions of the covenant of redemption have been fulfilled.

We may advance a step beyond this. If it be asked, Wherein consists the secret power of true prayer? the answer will be, In the perfect blending of our desires with the petitions issuing from the lips of our Advocate on high. There is a most precious sympathy, never fully understood on earth, established by the divine Spirit between the Christian in his closet and the Intercessor before the throne. We do not, perhaps, realize that the ardent longings of our hearts in prayer have been taken right out from the heart of

the great Intercessor, and wrought into the affections of the saint below. This gives prayer its mysterious efficacy. Being at one with him who effectively pleads above, his petition becomes our prayer ascending to heaven with all the fervency of his desire. It is no longer the cold homage of the lip, but the outbreathing of a heart in strange, yet blissful, fellowship with him who has purchased all for us with his atoning blood.

Even so in heaven, where prayer will merge into praise forever. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name," saith the Scripture. (Psalm xxix. 2.) Where is the seraph above that can hope to rise to the stature of God's infinite proportions! How much less we, who are creatures of the dust below! How enrapturing the thought that in Christ Jesus, "the High Priest of our profession," we have a leader who is able to conduct our worship so that it shall be worthy of the august Being to whom it is rendered! These poor human words of ours he will take upon his sacred lips, and translate them into the dialect known to the Adorable Three as they dwell alone in their pavilion of glory. Thus the eternal anthem shall rise and fill the dome of the heavenly temple: "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation: and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth:" while the chorus of "the new song" will be chanted by every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." (Rev. v. 9, 13.)

The following exquisite lines (authorship unknown to us) will close this chapter, throwing a devotional glow over the entire section:

THE INTERCESSOR.

"Father, I bring this worthless child to thee,
To claim thy pardon once, yet once again.
Receive him at my hands, for he is mine.
He is a worthless child; he owns his guilt.
Look not on him; he cannot bear thy glance.
Look thou on me; his vileness I will hide.
He pleads not for himself, he dares not plead.
His cause is mine, I am his Intercessor.
By each pure drop of blood I lost for him,
By all the sorrows graven on my soul,
By every wound I bear, I claim it due.
Father divine! I cannot have him lost.
He is a worthless soul, but he is mine.
Sin hath destroyed him; sin hath died in me.
Death hath pursued him; I have conquer'd death.
Satan hath bound him; Satan is my slave.
My Father! hear him now—not him, but me.
I would not have him lost for all the world
Thou for my glory hast ordain'd and made,
Because he is a poor and contrite child,
And all, his every hope, on me reclines.
I know my children, and I know him mine
By all the tears he weeps upon my bosom,
By his full heart that beateth against mine;
I know him by his sighings and his prayers,
By his deep, trusting love, which clings to me.
I could not bear to see him cast away,
Weak as he is, the weakest of my flock,
The one that grieves me most, that loves me least.
I measure not my love by his returns,
And though the stripes I send to speed him home
Drive him upon the instant from my breast,
Still he is mine; I drew him from the world;
He has no right, no home, but in my love.
Though earth and hell against his soul conspire,
I shield him, keep him, save him; we are one."

CHAPTER VI.

PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE OFFICE OF THE SON.—Continued.

THE fourth head under which the Son's official work should be viewed comes now to be considered, viz.:

IV. His mediatorial kingdom and rule. We distinguish properly between the *essential* kingdom of Christ, as he is God, and his *mediatorial* kingdom, as he is the God-man. In his divine nature, being of the same substance and equal with the Father in power and glory, he is invested with the same authority and rule. In what may be termed the absolute kingdom of God, we are not warranted in separating the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in their co-equal jurisdiction. But apart from the essential kingdom, the Mediator has acquired the right to rule in that complex nature which belongs to him as the Son of God and as the Son of man. The proper subjects of this kingdom are the redeemed, organized in a visible society, the church, over which, as mediator, he more directly rules. The administration of this spiritual empire, however, requires the extension of his sway over all creatures in heaven and earth; and the entire dispensation of providence is committed to his hands, that he may fulfil the terms of salvation to those who are his own. Except to note here this distinction between the mediatorial kingdom proper and that

wider providential jurisdiction which is subordinate and subsidiary to it, the two will not be separately considered. The same testimonies which prove the former establish also the latter; and the connection between both is so obvious as to compel the blending of the two in setting forth the prerogatives of our King.

1. *This dominion is acquired through the Father's grant.* "All power," says Christ, in issuing his commission to the church, "is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: . . and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 18–20.) "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Psa. ii. 6–8.) The prophet Isaiah declares: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder. . . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isa. ix. 6, 7.) So Daniel, with even greater explicitness: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And

there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. vii. 13, 14.) In the New Testament we have the declaration from Christ's own lips, "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son"; and to make it plain that this grant of power is conveyed to the Mediator, he adds: "and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." (John v. 22, 27.) He builds his priestly intercession upon this grant: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." (John xvii. 2.) Paul sets forth this universal dominion in its exact relation to his supremacy in the church: "When he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 20–23.) The climax of Scripture testimony is reached in Revelations xi. 15: "And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." The chain of proof runs through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; the lonely seer in Patmos, echoing the strain which fell from the

harp of David, and from the lips of ancient prophets, until at last the dawn of the millennium breaks upon the sight, when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xi. 9.) This grant, as the reward of our Lord's voluntary humiliation, is a clear ground of right; the Father has undisputed authority to convey, and the Mediator entire competency to receive, this trust.

2. *This mediatorial rule is not only bestowed by grant, it is also secured by purchase.* When the sinner's debt to the law was paid by the substitute, the bond being taken up and cancelled, the obligation was simply transferred to the endorser who had extinguished the claim of the original holder. Thus the redeemed become the property of Christ by actual purchase. Hence the appeal which, in the Scriptures, is addressed to the Christian conscience: "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. vi. 20.) So, again, we read in 1 Peter i. 18, 19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Again, in Gal. iii. 13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." So, finally, in the words of the "new song" chanted in heaven: "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v. 9, 10.)

But responsibilities accrue wherever rights are acquired. The souls which have been redeemed, in each generation, have come into the possession of him who purchased them with his blood. He is henceforth responsible for them through their future career. Shall he throw them from his hand? As soon as separated from him, they go back under the curse of the law which they have violated. Then why should they have been redeemed at all, if the whole scheme is thus to end in disastrous failure? If by this purchase the redeemed are to remain in his possession, and still more, if his covenant reward is to be found in this very possession, then a change must be wrought in their disposition and character coördinate with that which has been achieved in their legal condition. If the Mediator is to enjoy them forever as his peculiar portion, they must be brought into conformity with him in his immaculate holiness. Hence the kingly power builds upon the priestly work. He who made himself a sacrifice for the redeemed is constituted a king over them—invested with supreme jurisdiction to mould and guide and enjoy them as his own forever. Thus Zechariah, in his brilliant symbolized prophecy, recorded in chapter vi. 11, 12, 13: "Take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest; and speak unto him, saying, thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, behold the man whose name is the *Branch;* and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be

a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." How can the two offices be more closely woven together in human speech? The priest does not lay aside his sacred function on ascending the throne. On the contrary, as priest, he has acquired the throne—and the two functions are blended. In the combined fulfilment of both, the "counsel of peace," devised among the Adorable Three in the covenant of redemption, is carried into execution. Just between the mitre of the priest, and the crown of the king, lies the consummation of our salvation. If it is the priest who redeems, it is the king who applies the redemption: royal authority covers, with its power, the grace which priestly atonement has procured.

3. *This mediatorial empire belongs to the Son, as the architect of grace.* The introduction of sin into the universe is a mystery which we can but partially explore. For reasons best known to him who permitted it, the standard of rebellion was first raised in heaven itself. Jude tells us of "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, and are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." (Vs. 6.) Wonderful mystery! The seal of which may not be broken until we stand together upon the mount of God, and learn in the light of Jehovah's throne the connection of all worlds, and the wide-spreading relations of his infinite will. Sharp was the conflict, and decisive the issue, when the first rebels were hurled from their thrones and were bound in chains of darkness and despair until the hour of final judgment. So far holiness had

triumphed, and the first act in the great drama was closed.

It was, however, not the *destruction* of sin, but only its defeat. All the resources of the divine Being were not yet disclosed, nor was the worst evil of sin as yet perceived. Its fearful power to propagate itself remained to be seen in the fall of a second race, with the first transgressor as the tempter. What consternation must have been produced through the ranks of the holy, when the fatal leprosy had struck another world, and another race lay prostrate beneath the curse! Shall sin have power to spread from orb to orb, and shall no class be safe from its dire contagion? Is the conflict to be eternal, and must Omnipotence be forever tasked in suppressing new revolts? He whose prerogative it is to bring good out of evil allowed this extension of sin in order to its final overthrow. The resources must be evoked, not of power alone, but of wisdom and of grace. God must be known as love: and this revelation of himself shall be made in the complete extirpation of that which had wrought such disturbance in the universe. He will "make an end of sins, and bring in everlasting righteousness." (Dan. ix. 24.) For this the earth was built, that it might be the theatre of redemption. For this man was created, that in his history might be solved the mighty problem of sin, and the last battle be fought which will shut it up in its own place forever. The grand significance of this earthly history is scarcely felt by the most thoughtful of those who "by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality." The conflict with sin is not a single conflict in the ex-

perience of individual saints; but it is a part of that mighty struggle between the forces of darkness and light, begun before man was fashioned from the dust. And the triumph which is secured in the believer's exaltation to heaven is but the pledge of that final victory when God shall make an end of sin, and holiness shall prevail throughout his blessed empire. When the dispensation of the gospel shall be brought to its close, when the elect shall be gathered in from the four quarters of the globe, and Christ shall appear, without sin, "to be glorified in his saints," then "shall he sit upon the throne of his glory," and in the final banishment of all the wicked the last result of grace will be reached. Then shall be closed forever the battle between holiness and sin. The separation will be complete of the righteous and the wicked. Sin and Satan will have exhausted their resources. All who have taken part with them in opposition against God "will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." (2 Thess. i. 9.) Sin will be confined within the prison of despair, with no power to break forth any more; and all the rest of the universe shall be happy in holiness and in eternal exemption from temptation and from fear. Glorious consummation of grace, when redeeming love shall thus make an end of sin, and the universe be filled with righteousness and peace!

It is meet the crown should adorn the brow of him who is the architect of this grace—who, in the forge of his own dreadful passion, under the heat of judicial fires, wrought it out as an historic principle. Surely, he who in ascending to his Father above grafted this

grace upon the law, to reign in queenly majesty by the side of justice forever—surely he should wear the crown, and sit on the throne as "Jehovah's fellow." (Zech. xiii. 7.) To whom should this universal dominion belong if not to him through whom angels are confirmed indefectibly in holiness, and thus are gathered into one body in him? (Eph. i. 10; Col. i. 20.) Shall not he wear the crown who has healed the breach which sin has made between the creatures—so that they who guarded the way of the tree of life in the paradise lost shall swell the song of the redeemed in the paradise regained?

4. *The government of this lower world pertains to Christ as the Second Adam.* This touches the second term of the Mediator's person, who was both the Son of God and the Son of man.

Adam was made in the image of God, not only as having intelligence, reflecting upon his Maker the glory of a rational soul, but also that he might honor God through the operation of law. This, too, not simply as he was a subject, in the obedience which he should render, but as being in his sphere the maker and administrator of law. He was, accordingly, invested with immediate jurisdiction over the lower creation. The animals filed in pairs before him to receive their names, in recognition of his supremacy. Beyond this, he was constituted a ruler in the little state as it existed then in the family; out of which would spring the patriarchal authority, adapting itself with indefinite elasticity to an almost indefinite expansion, and which must, in the lapse of years, make man a constructor of governments and a legislator. Had not sin inter-

vened, we might have been presented with the spectacle of a single monarchy over the earth. To us, accustomed to the disabled condition to which sin has reduced us, the suggestion may appear sufficiently startling. But death being then unknown, the first father would have continued in the exercise of the premiership to which he was first appointed, and which no guilty descendant would have risen to dispute. In the absence of sin, too, there could have been no clashing of interests to break the peace of the world. With the diffusion of the race, power would necessarily be distributed; all heading up at last in the progenitor from whom it was derived, who would everywhere be recognized as the vice-regent of Jehovah upon earth. It passes before the mind as a splendid vision, melting into air as soon as it is beheld. Alas! the earliest page of human history is stained with the record of the fall, from which hour man has been incapable of this sublime trust. The disintegrating power of sin has been sadly proved, through all the centuries, in destroying the noblest structures which human wisdom can erect. The earth is strewed with the wreck of broken empires. Nothing abides. Kingdoms emerge from obscurity, rise to greatness, and then crumble to decay. The glory of human legislation is perpetually turning to shame. We are constantly shocked at the swift declension in public morals, and wonder how a degenerate offspring can so soon betray the virtues which should have been their inheritance from an honored ancestry.

Shall God's purpose fail in showing forth the beauty of justice and equity through a human administration

of law? The answer is returned in the appointment of the second Adam, the archetypal man, of whom the first Adam was but the shadow and the type; who seizes the falling sceptre, and illustrates, in his kingly no less than in his priestly office, the glories of law. God speaks, by the mouth of his prophets, of the Saviour's exaltation to this kingdom: "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." (Ezek. xxi. 27.) So David in the eighth Psalm: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (Verses 4–6.) Which entire passage the apostle carries over in its typical application to Jesus Christ as the second Adam: "But now we see not yet all things put under him; but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb. ii. 8, 9.) It is impossible to escape the conclusion established in this comparison: Man was constituted monarch of the earth. But this jurisdiction, being forfeited by sin, can only be reclaimed and exercised by one who has fulfilled the conditions in which the first man has failed. Hence the mediatorial sway of Jesus Christ over the creatures is a right inhering in him as "the second man, the Lord from heaven." (1 Cor. xv. 47.)

5. *Mediatorial rule is involved in Christ's headship*

over the church. Strictly individual as may be our relations to the law, both as to obedience of the precept and subjection to the penalty, yet the individual has never existed apart from the race to which he belongs. His being is derived from parents, in whose loins he potentially was; and from birth he is found in a nest of relationships, from which he is never disentangled. Nay, further back in the covenant with the first man, all his descendants were regarded as implicitly contained in him, not only as the natural root, but as the representative head. Equally in the covenant of grace all the redeemed are contemplated as being in the substitute who represents them under the law, and in whose vicarious death they find their discharge from the curse. We are individually redeemed, it is true, but always forming a constituency; each member of which is a necessary part of the whole, through an identical relation to a common Head. In short, man, a social being from his inward structure and from his outward environment, is recognized and treated as such in both the spheres of nature and of grace. Thus the redeemed are distinctly organized into a corporate society, the church, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the appointed Head. In this, however, kingly authority is necessarily implied; for in enacting laws, appointing officers, instituting sacraments, and the like, the recognized Head also wields a jurisdiction which invests him with all the dignity and power of a king. This holds more especially true, as this body is spiritual in its nature—a kingdom which is administered through the truth, over the consciences and hearts of men, and into which no intrusion of human

legislation is allowed. (John xviii. 36.) The shutting up the church to her connection alone with her Head, couples with it his investiture with supreme authority and rule.

6. *If the Priest procure salvation, the King must ensure it to the redeemed.* The expansion of this in all the details of Christian experience would swell this chapter into a portly volume. Two or three instances will suffice: The human race, having fallen into condemnation through the wiles of the devil, is brought under the usurped dominion of this arch-apostate. The Scriptures proclaim the melancholy domination of this evil spirit in no measured terms. He is called "the devil" and "Satan," with all the suggestion of malice hidden beneath these names. With reference to the power which he wields, he is described as "the god of this world," as "the prince of this world," and still more emphatically, as the head of a mighty army of evil spirits, "the prince of the power of the air." His antagonism to the Redeemer and to his work was announced in the beginning in the enmity between the serpent and the woman's seed, and it was abundantly illustrated in the temptation of our Lord in the wilderness. His ascendency over unregenerate men is set forth in every form of speech: He is "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 2.) He blinds "the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 4.) In the parable of the tares these are denominated "the children of the wicked one, the enemy that sowed them being the devil." (Matt. xiii.

38.) The Apostle John declares explicitly, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning." (1 John iii. 8.) Our Lord himself openly denounced the Pharisees, saying, "Ye are of your father, the devil; and the lusts of your father ye will do." (John viii. 44.) Finally, Satan is declared to be "judged," and at length his "works are to be destroyed," by Christ Jesus. (Heb. ii. 14; 1 John iii. 8.) In anticipation of which, our Lord, to the seventy who returned with joy to him, exclaiming, "Even the devils are subject unto us through thy name," replied, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." (Luke x. 18.) And in Revelation xx. 2, the seer in Patmos saw "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, bound and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years;" which is but the foreshadowing of his final destiny, when he shall be cast "into the lake of fire," declared expressly to be "prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. xxv. 41.)

Obviously, then, after redemption, the work of the priest, comes the rescue, which is the work of the king. He is clothed with all majesty and power to recover these unhappy subjects of the prince of darkness, into "the glorious liberty of the children of God." Not only so; but being delivered from "the bondage of corruption," they must be kept from falling a prey again to their "adversary, the devil, who walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." This office of protection, as well as of deliverance, is assigned to him who is exalted at God's right hand to be "a Prince and a Saviour"; and whose assuring promise to his people is, "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

Again: when Christ, our substitute under the law, redeemed the life which had been forfeited by sin, what is to be done with it? Having made its recovery sure by his resurrection, he ascends with it into heaven; there holding it, as trustee, safe from all the machinations of the enemy, to be communicated in due season to all the redeemed as they shall severally be born in the succeeding generations of the race. Without pausing here to indicate the agency by which this spiritual life is communicated to the believer, it is sufficient to signalize the fact that the salvation of the sinner has its practical beginning in the new birth, whereby he is quickened into life again. In Galatians iv. 19, Paul writes, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be found in you." In Colossians i. 19, he speaks of "Christ in you the hope of glory." And with great enlargement of statement he writes in Galatians ii. 20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." In order to the execution of this sacred trust, as the author of life to those he has redeemed, Christ must be endowed with this supreme official power to consummate the work which was begun in the sinner's redemption.

A more conspicuous illustration perhaps may be found in the glorification of believers, and their final translation to heaven. Not only is their holiness rendered complete in the deliverance from the very presence and being of sin, but the redeemed body must share in the glory of the purchased reward. Though it may have returned to dust ages ago, yet must it be quickened into a new resurrection-life, and be drawn

up as by magnetic attraction of the glorified body of the Lord, with whom it has been united by an indissoluble living tie. How supreme must be the control of that glorified Head, who thus consummates the work of grace with power; lifting the saint into fellowship with himself in the glory which constitutes his own mediatorial reward! It is unnecessary to urge other instances of the supremacy of him who is charged with the administration of grace throughout time and eternity; and whose power will be perpetually manifested in sustaining the redeemed under the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" which shall be their portion in the kingdom above.

In prayer we touch constantly the kingly sceptre of our ascended Lord, simply because in this office he consummates "the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." As this cannot be presented in detail without undue expansion, two points only will be here considered—especially as the second will require a little elaboration. In the first place, it is of immense service in prayer to look steadfastly to the power by which its requests are to be fulfilled. Observe, too, that it is not the recognition of power as it resides in the infinite Father, but as it is confided to the Son to exercise the same. It is power brought within our reach, since it is officially assigned to one who, having provided redemption, must see its benefits secured to those for whom they are designed. It steadies prayer and gives it strength, to know that it is not spoken into the air, but that it is addressed directly to him whose function it is to hear and answer the same. The sceptre of this King is always extended to the suppliant, while

the voice from the throne speaks with an assuring tenderness, "What wilt thou, and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom." Nor is this all. The approach in prayer is made with increasing confidence, since this King is our "Elder Brother," clothed with all the sensibilities, affections and sympathies of our nature; and who especially can "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The conclusion is drawn from this by the apostle himself, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. iv. 15, 16.)

In addition to all this, consider what it imports to the child of God that the whole administration of providence is committed to him who has redeemed his soul from death. The dispensations of providence are often dark and forbidding, and they seem to frown upon us when we regard them only as issuing from the hand of "the unknown God." No wonder that the crushed heart cries out from the depths, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" But how soon is seen "the rainbow round about the throne," when we view our Priest-King seated beneath its blessed arch, dispensing grace to help in every trial and in every sorrow! Who shall fear to trust him who has shed his blood for our ransom, and who is exalted to power and dominion expressly that he may succor and save those whom he has redeemed? Perhaps no practical truth needs more to be pressed on the conscience of the church than this exercise of providential rule by our Saviour.

Surely, having committed our souls into his hand for the life to come, we can afford to entrust the cares of this mortal life to him who administers all providence—in order that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. viii. 28.) Prayer carries us into the bosom of all these mysterious dealings of the divine hand; accepting them as ordained in love, the discipline of grace "which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.) Prayer then, as it leans upon power, leans upon the King seated on what is expressively denominated "the throne of grace."

In the second place, prayer has a direct concern with the kingly office of Christ; since in him are vested all the promises which constitute the matter of true prayer. In reference to this, two points are to be considered:

(1), All the promises of grace are made to Christ, as the trustee and representative of his people. It is, therefore, his official charge to administer the same. It it very common to say that the promises of the gospel are made to sinners; true enough in this sense, that they are made on behalf of sinners, and accrue to their advantage; but it is inaccurate to say that these promises ever were, in the first instance, made directly to sinners considered as such. There is not one promise, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, which a holy God could speak directly to those who lie under the condemnation of the law. There can be no contradiction in the utterances of

God. If under a dispensation of law he has proclaimed "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," then as the lawgiver he cannot say to us, at the same moment, "ye shall live." He appoints, therefore, his own Son to be the believer's representative and surety; and the promises of the covenant are made to him as he becomes incarnate and undertakes for the sinner to die in his stead. In this relation of trustee, he holds them in his hand, and is charged by the Father with the responsibility of administering the same.

(2), Then the Lord Jesus, to whom these promises are given in trust, has also fulfilled the conditions on which they were suspended. Here we have the solution of the question, sometimes raised in theological circles, whether the promises of the Bible are to be understood as *absolute* or *conditional*. The reply is that they are both; but, of course, to two entirely distinct parties. These promises are given to the Lord Jesus Christ upon the condition that he shall fulfil the stipulations of the covenant of grace. He must be willing to become the representative of the sinner. He must be willing to leave "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was," and be found incarnate on the earth. "Being found in fashion as a man," he must be willing to become "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He must go down into the grave, in order to carry the curse and bury it there. He must rise from that grave, in order to secure the life which his people have forfeited. He must ascend into his Father's presence, to sue out the pardon which he has purchased with his blood. He must qualify every soul whom he has redeemed, so

that it shall be fit to sit at his right hand. These are the stipulations of the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son; and upon their fulfilment all these promises are suspended. As made to him, therefore, the promises are conditional—resting upon his execution of the terms of the contract between the two.

But when the Lord Jesus, as the administrator of these promises, makes them over from himself to us, they are absolute, unclogged with restrictions of any sort. They come to us as the free expression of that love which burns in his bosom and in the bosom of the Father. It may occur to the reader to ask whether faith be not a conditon, on our part, in order to the realization of these promises of grace? The word, though not sufficiently discriminating, is not unsafe, if we are careful to separate from it all supposition of merit; as though man, in the exercise of this faith, had brought the Almighty under obligation to bestow upon him the blessings of heaven. It may be wiser to represent faith as a prerequisite rather than as a condition; to indicate it as a characteristic which defines and discriminates the parties to whom the promises are *absolutely* made. If we go into a careful examination of the Scriptures, we shall find every promise to be addressed to the believer—made to those who are in Christ, having by faith been brought into vital union with him: "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 15.) "Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious." (1 Peter ii. 7.) "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not,

And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. iii. 16.)

We take this to be the true view of the case. Jehovah in his sovereign goodness holds in his hand infinite blessings to bestow upon men, all which are wrapped up in gracious promises. Now, to approximate these blessings, and the promises, to the sinner lying under condemnation, the Father appoints a trustee, sends his own Son to occupy that intervening relation, and to him all the promises are made over. If the sinner is to have a vested right in these promises and in the salvation which they assure, he must be found in Christ to whom they are made. Faith discriminates the parties, and marks the character of those to whom these promises are not conditionally, but absolutely given from the free and infinite grace of our Heavenly Father. Faith, then, is not a meritorious condition, by and through which we procure a right to the promises; it is only the hand stretched forth to receive the free blessings which come to us of pure grace alone.

The importance of this distinction cannot be overlooked in recognizing the relation which prayer sustains to the kingly office of our Redeemer. These promises afford to us the very matter of true prayer. An exceedingly loose opinion prevails, that prayer is only the utterance before God of human wishes; and when the petitioner can bring himself to a strong conviction that his desires will be granted, this is the condition which is required. But faith reposes upon a warrant, in which the force of the pleading resides; and mere strength of conviction, unless it rests upon

some promise, amounts to nothing. Undoubtedly the child of God may approach his heavenly Father, just as a child may approach an earthly father, with full confidence in the love which beats in a parent's bosom. Yet in either case there is a felt distinction in the petitions presented. Those favors which are guaranteed under a promise are sought in prayer with absolute certainty of a gracious reply. There are, however, many other things earnestly desired, which are to us wholly contingent. We know not whether it is "the Father's good pleasure" to bestow that which we seek. In these cases we offer our petitions in submission to the wisdom and will superior to our own, content whether the favor be granted or denied. The Christian, for example, may earnestly desire and fervently pray for health, or riches, or power; God, with that love which is alike infinitely wise and good, may see that all these requests interfere with our own interests and with his glory. We ask for health, while he knows that our spiritual growth depends largely upon the discipline of sickness and pain. The wealth we seek may be denied, because it would prove a dangerous snare to the soul. So a child may imploringly ask for a six-bladed knife glittering in the father's hand; which a discreet love will refuse, because it can only be hurtful in an unskilful hand. The true material of prayer must, therefore, be found in the promise which gives assurance to faith; and the confidence which builds on anything else builds upon the sand.

It will be very instructive, on this point, to examine critically those passages of Scripture in which the language seems the most indefinite and large, in order to

discover the reservation of sovereignty implied in the terms that are employed. Take the following as examples: In John xiv. 13 we read, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Again, in chapter xv. 7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." And in 1 John v. 14, "This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." Can any one fail to recognize the limitation in each of these testimonies? What is it to "ask in Christ's name" but to ask by his authority, and for the blessings which he alone can convey? Again, we may "ask what we will," but then his "words must abide in us" as the directory of what we should be willing to desire. In the third passage cited the testimony is exceedingly explicit: "the confidence we are to have in him" is based on the knowledge of his will, showing "what things we should pray for as we ought."

Such, then, is the intimate connection between prayer and the kingly office of our Lord, as the substance and the success of our petitions must be sought in the promises whose conditions have all been fulfilled by him.

CHAPTER VII.

PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT.

IT does not fall within the scope of this essay to discuss the whole doctrine of the Spirit, but only the function assigned to him in the economy of grace. In the discharge of this he is woven into the experience of the Christian, and is acknowledged in every syllable of true prayer. We are under no necessity of repeating here the exposition already given of the distinction of persons in the unity of the Godhead. In the sense in which the Son is distinguished from the Father, precisely so is the Spirit distinguished from them both. As it is the property of the Son to be "begotten" of the Father, so it is the property of the Spirit to "proceed" from the Father and the Son. The terms are certainly mysterious, and we shall probably never comprehend, even in the world to come, the mode of the one or of the other. All that we can venture to understand is, that in this distinction of persons there is no separation between them, and that the unity is preserved by the equal participation in the divine essence mysteriously existing in each from every other, and without succession in time, or inferiority in degree. We say, perhaps, all this is inconceivable; but equally inconceivable is the self-existence of God, which is, nevertheless, the fundamental postulate in regard to him. The mystery is beyond

explanation, simply because Jehovah is singular and alone; there is none other like him, in the manner of his being, throughout the universe; and hence there is no analogy affording the terms of comparison. It is the incomprehensibility belonging to the Infinite, which would be reduced to the finite if it be brought within the limits of the creature's reason. Only this may be added, though it fail even to light up the edge of this deep mystery: That the unity, which might seem to be broken by the divergence of the Son from the Father, may be viewed as restored when both the Father and the Son meet again in the Spirit, who "proceeds" from them both. Thus the divine unity is seen to be not only a unity of essence, but also in the interpenetration and blending, each within every other, of the persons themselves.

In considering the office work of the Spirit, we notice the same subordination to the other persons of the Godhead which has before been noted between the Son and the Father. The assertion of this is so emphatic in the Scriptures, that few citations are needed. Let the following suffice: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." (John xiv. 16.) Also in verse 26, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Again, in chapter xv. 26, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." And in chapter xvi.

7, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Especially is the Spirit's office dependent on that of the Son: "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. . . . He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." (John xvi. 13, 14.) This subordination is still further marked in connecting the work of the Holy Ghost with the exaltation of Christ as glorified in heaven. In John vii. 39 it is expressly declared, "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." And in Acts ii. 33 the Apostle Peter thus accounts for the wonders on the day of Pentecost: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Will the reader please to observe, in these testimonies, the double relation of the Spirit to both the Father and the Son, together with the immediate dependence of the Spirit's work upon that of the Son? First, it is the Father who will give the Comforter; then, it is the Father sending him in the name of the Son. After this it is promised by Christ that he himself will send the Comforter; and finally, it is added that he will send the Spirit from the Father. Yet when the Spirit comes, it is his office to testify of Christ, bringing to remembrance all things which he had said. Again, it is affirmed, the Spirit shall not speak of himself; he will glorify Christ Jesus by receiving of him whatever he

shall show unto us. In this blending of agencies, however, there is no confusion of offices. In the covenant of grace it is the Son who redeems, and it is the Spirit who applies the redemption, while it is the supreme function of the Father to adjudge and to accept the work done by each in his appropriate and subordinate sphere.

The fact, that in the scheme of grace the Spirit's agency is circumscribed within the work of the Son, should have afforded protection against all the forms of fanaticism which so often have disfigured and travestied the Christian religion. These naturally foist in their claims just where they are least open to detection, in the secret operations of the Divine Spirit within the individual soul. As the Bible clearly reveals such an agent, whose spiritual function is to move the affections of man's inner nature, it is easy to ascribe every craze of the imagination to his controlling influence. In the seclusion of his own consciousness, into which none can enter to explore, the enthusiast may claim what commerce he pleases with this supernatural being, and palm off the delusions of his own fancy as revelations from heaven. But if the office of the Holy Ghost is to glorify the Son as the redeemer of men, if he shall speak only what is given him to unfold, if he is simply to testify of Christ in bringing his words to remembrance, then all these exclusive pretensions of frenzied fanatics can be brought to the test of Scripture. If they be not in accordance with what is written, there "is no light in them." All the fantastic dreams of men are brought at once to this touch-stone; and the function of the

Holy Spirit becomes the more sacred because of its restraint within these limits, and our consequent safety under his teaching and influence.

Taking up now the office-work of the Holy Spirit as it is embraced in, and carries out, that of the Son, THE FIRST INQUIRY WILL BE IN WHAT WAY HIS AGENCY IS BLENDED WITH THE LATTER AS THE REVEALER OF GOD TO MAN.

All the knowledge we have concerning God comes to us through revelation: and this revelation, as shown in a preceding chapter, is made by the Son, who is "the Word." It is his office to lift the veil from the transcendent truths which lie within the depths of Jehovah's nature. He authoritatively discloses the relations of all the divine attributes, and their outworking, in the history of providence and grace. The character of the government maintained over the creatures, the precepts and sanctions of the law under which this government is administered, and, above all, the free thoughts and purposes of God's sovereign will—all these mighty secrets only the eternal "Wisdom" can disclose, whom "the Lord possessed in the beginning of his way, before his works of old." (Prov. viii. 22.) But when this revelation is put on permanent record for the use of man, it is apparent this must be done in the forms of human thought and in the accents of human speech. Yet how can these divine treasures be safely committed to a conveyance so frail? How shall beings who are not only fallible, but sinful, be entrusted with these amazing disclosures, to report them in a mortal dialect to distant generations? Just here the agency of the Spirit

is introduced, securing a true record of a divine revelation in the sacred Scriptures. Thus inspiration by the third Person in the Godhead stands over against revelation by the second Person; giving the coördinate factors, the divine and the human elements, which enter into the composition of the volume which is to be the infallible rule of Christian faith and practice.

After this follows a secondary work of the Spirit in enlightening the minds which have been blinded by sin, and so bringing them to a true apprehension of divine things. The inquiry proposed above breaks, therefore, into the two sections of inspiration and spiritual illumination, both of which invite our attention:

I. *The work of inspiration in creating the sacred Scriptures.* The necessity for this need not be argued. We cannot possess a divine book unless the conveyance be divine throughout. Neither, on the other hand, can it be a human book, except by the incarnation of the divine in the human; analogous to the incarnation of the personal Word, from whom the revelation is derived. Dispensing, then, with argument on this point, we are brought squarely up to the fact itself: whether there is any work of the Spirit by which the divine and the human are brought together in the Bible. What then is the testimony in the case? The Prophet Joel (chap. ii. 29) delivers God's promise in these words: "It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:" all which the Apostle Peter declares (Acts ii. 17) was punctually

fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. In Luke i. 70, Zacharias, himself inspired, speaks of the birth of Christ being as God had "spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began." So Peter, speaking of Christ as "received into heaven until the times of restitution of all things," adds, "which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." And Paul testifies of the gospel, that "God had promised it afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures." (Rom. i. 2.) Peter (i. 11) declares it was "the Spirit of Christ in the prophets who testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." In 2 Tim. iii. 16, Paul affirms with great explicitness: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." And finally, every cavil is silenced in 2 Peter i. 21, by the emphatic statement: "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved (literally, 'borne forward') by the Holy Ghost." It is indisputable, then, that the Bible, though speaking with the tongues of men, claims to be the word of God through the inspiration of the Divine Spirit.

It is useless to speculate how this supernatural influence was exerted upon those who were inspired. All the Spirit's operations are covered with a cloud which will not lift before the gaze of human research. The very name by which he is designated, the Spirit, betrays nothing as to the property which distinguishes him in the communion of the Godhead. Nor does the term "procession" indicate the manner in which the

divine essence is derived to him from the Father and the Son. As we advance to the contemplation of his work, this is so intricately mingled with the spontaneous actings of the human spirit, that his entire office becomes difficult of exposition. This seal of secrecy discriminates his office from that of both Father and Son. Whilst the former is invisible, and we are forbidden to figure him under any image, still we can in some sort understand his office as the supreme lawgiver and representative of the Godhead. When we turn to the work of the Son, this is so entirely objective in the fulfilment of law, that we can encompass his altar of sacrifice on the four sides of the square. Though not fully comprehending the import of his work, we scan the method of its accomplishment and see how through him we draw near to God. But the Holy Spirit finds access within the sanctuary of the human soul, works directly upon its faculties, yet so blends his agency with the consciousness of our individual freedom, that all we can measure is the final result. This feature of the Spirit's work will meet us at every stage of our investigation: but we encounter it first here in his inspiration of prophets in the Old Testament and of apostles in the New. It is impossible to go beyond this statement—that a mysterious power was exerted upon them by this blessed agent, which enabled them safely to conceive, and accurately to express, the truth which they were commissioned to record. It may seem a scant description to regard it only as a hidden power acting directly upon the writers of the Bible: but there is an immense advantage in this dynamical aspect of the Spirit's work. It rids us for-

ever of that mechanical theory of inspiration, which reduced the sacred penmen to mere scribes, writing under simple dictation, and with no more intelligence in their work than the pens which they used as the instrument of their labor. It also relieves us of the dangerous hypothesis which puts a reed in our hand to measure the degrees of inspiration, and to determine of each portion of the Bible how much, or how little of it is divine, and how much, or how little of it is purely human. It gives us the whole book as the word of God, the product of the Spirit's agency; and yet it preserves the individuality of each writer of the canon, with the full expression of his mental characteristics and the peculiar coloring of his genius and taste. It gives us a book which is throughout divine, and yet a book which is genuinely human. Who would care to go beyond this, a book which is the second rainbow after the first, the secondary incarnation of the great Revealer, whose amazing disclosures of truth the Divine Spirit has seized, and cast upon the screen of human feeling and thought? With what devout reverence, therefore, should we clasp this blessed book to our heart, as being with a threefold emphasis the word of God! It is the mind and will of our Father in heaven; it is that mind revealed to us by the Son; it is that revelation interpreted by the Spirit; this Spirit also abiding in us to apply its counsels in all the exigencies of the Christian life. But this brings us:

II. *To his second work, of spiritual illumination.* Sin has depraved man's whole nature. It has darkened his understanding, estranged his affections,

debauched his conscience, and enslaved his will. Through the loss of the principle of holiness, which is the very life of God in the soul, he is brought into a state of spiritual death. In emancipating the sinner from "the bondage of corruption" in which he is held by the prevalence of evil within him, the Holy Spirit must act equally upon all the faculties. He must enlighten the mind, reclaim the affections, purge the conscience, and liberate the will. It is with the first of these we are immediately concerned. Our Lord's promise (John xiv. 26) is, that "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, shall teach you all things; bringing all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Thus the Spirit, as a living teacher, using the text-book in his hand, will impart that knowledge which is necessary to the Christian's establishment in grace. Again (John xvi. 13, 14), "the Spirit of truth . , . will guide you into all truth; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." The descriptive word here should be noted: the Spirit "will guide you"; he will lead the way into the truth; implying a constant agency in conducting to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Finally, the Apostle John (First Epistle, ii. 27) urges the effectiveness of this teaching: "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." In this testimony two things are distinctly emphasized: The superiority of the Spirit's teaching over all human instruction, because he is the truth himself,

and incapable of error; and also the effect of his teaching to secure our abiding in Christ.

These statements are abundantly confirmed in the daily experience of every true Christian. A particular portion of Scripture may have been read a thousand times, with no distinct impression made upon the mind, when, in a given moment, it bursts upon us with a blaze of meaning, filling us with strange comfort and joy. The heart has become suddenly enriched in the new disclosures, so that the happy hour marks for us a special progress in divine knowledge. Then, too, independent of this unusual illumination of the Scriptures, there will be a manifest, though gradual, deepening of our knowledge as we advance in the divine life. A new emphasis will be acquired in every verse, and one passage will lie over against another with a new interpretation, until the sacred Book becomes a treasure-house filled with the riches of God's grace.

The Spirit dwells within us in order that he may by a direct influence open to us the Scriptures, and bring us to a knowledge of the truth which the Son has revealed. This influence may be exerted in a variety of ways. He may, for example, stimulate a merely intellectual interest in revealed truth, so that, with a desire better to understand it as a connected system, the Christian may more closely examine the Scriptures, whose counsels at length reach and control the heart. Or, reversing the process, the believer may be brought to a deeper sense of his own spiritual needs, and his attention will thus be riveted to those portions of the Bible which apply to his case, with a

clearer impression of the preciousness of its contents. Or the child of God may, under the discipline of a gracious Providence, be reduced to such straits as to fly to the word which shall explain to him the design of these mysterious dealings. Or, finally, the Holy Spirit may in a special degree quicken our sensibilities and deepen our religious affections, that we may seek in the Scriptures for him with whom our souls would hold a closer fellowship. It is not for us to explain how the Holy Ghost may lay his hands upon all the chords of the human spirit, and touch all the springs of emotion in the human breast. These instances are cited merely to illustrate how his work may be efficaciously performed without impinging upon the freedom and responsibility of man himself, carrying on "the work of faith with power" to its result in the blessedness of heaven.

Such being the relation of the Spirit's work to the truth, in securing a true record of divine revelation and in interpreting it to the faith of God's people, it remains to be seen how this affects the doctrine and duty of prayer. Evidently, a heart burdened with sin, or with grief, or with care, will desire to know whether there is a supreme power to which it can apply for relief. Then it will ask whether this power will look graciously upon the petition when it is offered. Next, it must inquire whether a way of approach has been opened into its presence; and, lastly, by what plea it may certainly hope to prevail. Some information needs to be given on these preliminary points, before a troubled soul will be encouraged to attempt the office of prayer. A book is now placed in the hand

of this inquirer which settles all his scruples, if the statements in it can be shown to be true. To his dismay, however, he finds this book to have been written by frail men like himself, and having the same disabilities under which he himself labors. How, then, can he throw his case upon the teachings of a book which seems to rest solely upon human and fallible authority? The final explanation now comes. He learns that all this knowledge is from the Supreme Being, and from no other; that the revelation is officially made by the eternal Son, who is entirely competent to the task; and if it be rendered in human speech through the outward authorship of mortal men, these were infallibly guided in all the work of transcription by the Holy Spirit, specially deputed by the Father and the Son to this necessary function. Then, last of all, is the assurance that the sincere and humble Christian will not be suffered to miscarry in the interpretation of this message of mercy; for the same Spirit who first inspired the word, is within him to open the message more and more each day to his understanding. What a firm support is here given to the office of prayer! The believer is no longer uncertain and wavering, as one who beats the air. His petitions are guided by the truth, infallibly conveyed to him through the double intervention of the Revealer and the Interpreter. In the truth thus possessed he not only treads firmly the way of access to the throne of the King, but his petitions are burdened with the words which the King himself has spoken. The matter of the prayer itself is furnished, and he simply hands in the cheques which draw upon the

deposit already in the bank, and which cannot fail as long as the bank itself is solvent. With a clear apprehension of all this, the believer has only to "draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith" to find the Promiser remembering his word, "open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

CHAPTER VIII.

PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT.—Continued.

THE next view of the Holy Spirit presents him as *the living bond of union between the believer and Christ.* In dying, the just for the unjust, the Lord Jesus has redeemed the sinner from that death which is the penalty of the law. This death is threefold: *Death temporal*, in the return of the body to the dust from which it was fashioned; *death spiritual*, in the loss of that holiness in which the soul had fellowship with God; *death eternal*, in casting both soul and body into hell forever. The redemption from the first is accomplished in the resurrection of the body. (Rom. viii. 11, 23.) The redemption from the second is the communication of spiritual life by the Holy Ghost. (Gal. ii. 20; Eph. ii. 1.) The redemption from the third is the receiving the Christian into glory. (John xvii. 24.) We are concerned in this chapter only with the second of these three.

The life with which we are quickened by the Holy Ghost at the "new birth," is the life which Christ, our high priest, purchased for us through his own death. It is stored in him, as we have before seen, as the treasury from which it may be dispensed under his trusteeship to those whom he has redeemed. The Spirit communicates it from him to us; and the faith which unites us to his living person is the channel of

its continued conveyance, through the whole of our progressive sanctification. The change effected in this new birth is represented in Scripture under a variety of images almost equally striking. Sometimes it is called a *creation:* "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." (Eph. ii. 10.) Again, it is termed a *resurrection:* "That like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. vi. 4, 5.) It is also styled a *quickening:* "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Eph. ii. 1.) It is compared by the prophet to the conversion of *flint* into *flesh:* "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." (Ezek. xxxvi. 26.) These coördinate expressions certainly imply a change which is radical, pervading, transforming—a change as great in the faculties and movements of the soul, as that experienced in the body when an infant is born into the world, or when a corpse is raised from the tomb.

What, then, is this spiritual life communicated to the sinner in the "new birth"? It is a question of surprising difficulty, the moment we pass beyond a general description and attempt a scientific definition. Who will tell us what life is? Even the physical life evades research. The anatomist has never taken it up on the point of his scalpel, as he does the tissue or the cell, with the joyful discovery, "see, here it is." He may describe the conditions on which it depends; he may enumerate the signs of its presence; he may recount

the results which it can accomplish. But what it is in itself, the most advanced science has not been able to pronounce. It is just this mystery we encounter in discussing the question of the "new birth"—a mystery by so much the greater as the *spiritual* life is more hidden and delicate than the *natural*. Precisely the same difficulty meets us in the exposition of the one as of the other. It is easy enough to say that spiritual life depends, as the condition, upon communion with God, from whom alone it is derived; and that its certain fruit will be a holy obedience to the will of God. But this description of the life is not the exhibition of it in its primary essence. On this account the treatises which undertake the discussion of this topic are laid down with the most profound disappointment. They describe the "new birth" on its *negative*, rather than its *positive*, side. They tell abundantly what it is *not;* but fail to point out exactly what it *is*. The defect is not easily supplied. Still, analogies have been suggested, which do appear to throw light upon the nature of the change which is wrought in the "new birth."

We speak, for example, of one man as constitutionally irascible or malignant, and of another as constitutionally amiable; intending thus to intimate a proclivity in the two to the class of actions which are defined by these terms. The soul is the same in both as to its original structure, having the same faculties, and under the operation of the same general laws. But the prevailing disposition, which lies back of all these natural faculties and qualifies their action, is different in the two men. This inner principle, whatever it be, which

enthrones itself as a ruling power in the soul, controlling its affections and determining its acts, may be as difficult to seize and define as the principle which we call life. When we speak of the nature of the lion, or of the lamb, of the tiger and the bear, do we mean anything more than the habitual disposition of these animals which determines their character and conduct? Knowing this, we can pronounce beforehand what their behavior will be in given circumstances. In like manner we speak of a holy nature in the saint, and of a wicked nature in the sinner; meaning by this a holy or a sinful principle dominating in the one and in the other, determining their actions and giving them moral character in the eye of the law.*

Thus when God, in the first instance, created man, he not only created the soul with all its faculties of memory, judgment, conscience, heart, and will, necessary to constitute him a responsible being, but he placed within that soul, in the bosom of all its powers, a holy disposition, which should preside over them all as the principle of spiritual life, manifesting itself in holy exercises and acts of obedience. This principle sin has destroyed. The soul remains in its structure what it was before the fall. The same faculties re-

*The first clear conception of this subject, in its positive aspect, was obtained by the writer from the first of Dr. Thornwell's Discourses on Truth (*Coll. Writings*, Vol. II., pp. 468 '69), where the substance of these paragraphs may be found. With equal felicity of illustration and analysis, he describes holiness as "not a habit, nor a collection of habits, but the indispensable condition of them all. . . . All moral qualities inhere in it, as properties inhere in substance. It is to the moral faculties of man what extension is to matter—the very form of their existence."

main to the sinner which are necessary to him as man. He could not be divested of one of these without being divested of responsibility, and without being thrown into a different category from that in which he was created. The fundamental disposition, however, has been changed. The principle of holiness has been supplanted by that of sin, which henceforth, as a regulative principle, moves the man in a direction forbidden by God's law. In the "new birth" the Holy Ghost restores this lost principle of holiness, which is from the beginning the principle of spiritual life in man. Hence the propriety of the technical phrases under which his work is described. He "quickens" those "dead in trespasses and sins," because the restoration of holiness as a ruling principle in the soul is the restoration of its true and real life. Of course, its power is at once displayed in the holy acts which it prompts, and the change is visible in the character and life of the believer. It is just as though God should supernaturally change the original disposition of the tiger into that of the lamb, manifesting itself in a corresponding change in the characteristic acts of the two. Or it is like the graft which infuses a new virtue into the tree, qualifying the fruit it shall hereafter produce, without altering the texture, or displacing a single fibre, in trunk or limb. So the eternal Spirit, moving upon and through all the powers of the human soul, without infringing their liberty of action, "quickens" the sinner into spiritual life by restoring the lost principle of holiness.

The transformation is effected by the Holy Ghost, in a direct exercise of supernatural and gracious power.

Yet it is accomplished in a way perfectly congruous with man's rational nature—by illumination of the mind, purification of the affections, and direction of the will. The chief perplexity is in reconciling the essential activity of man's spirit with that degree of passiveness necessary to the reception of a new principle from without. Undoubtedly the soul is active; we cannot conceive it to be otherwise. Neither in this world, nor in that to come, is this activity ever remitted. Yet, from the nature of the case, man is wholly passive in regeneration; not so much the agent as the patient; not the subject who acts, but the object which is acted upon. How shall we reconcile the amazing paradox? How shall we trace the activity so essential to spirit, in the very moment when it is the passive recipient of an influence by which its whole character is transformed? Perhaps an analogy drawn from one of Mr. Coleridge's acute distinctions, so characteristic of his subtle genius, may help to clear up the apparent contradiction: "In attention," says he, "the mind is passive—receiving impressions from without; in thought, it is active—producing from itself." And yet is there not intense activity in the eagerness with which these external impressions are taken up by the mind? Must not power be exerted to a high degree, in simply holding the mind in that receptive condition which is the peculiar mark of attention? All the anguish of mental discipline lies just in this, to gain that mastery over our own faculties which is necessary to the acquisition or to the reproduction of knowledge. This illustration will serve to show that activity may not be intermitted,

but may be called to its highest exertion, whilst yet we are the passive recipients of a new power communicated to us from without. The whole current of a sinner's thought and feeling may suddenly be turned from the world to God; and whilst he is entirely passive in the supernatural change, there will not be an instant in which he is not conscious of the fulness of his activity and responsibility before God.

Three conclusions, then, are reached: *First*, That in the "new birth" a supernatural change is wrought upon the entire nature of the sinner, in the transformation of that inner disposition which gives color and tone to every act, and which is brought at once under the controlling power of holiness. *Second*, The Holy Ghost is the author of this change; who yet accomplishes it in perfect harmony with the fundamental laws of our spiritual economy, never interfering with that spontaneity which is essential to responsibility. *Third*, That while in every change in his experience the sinner is perfectly conscious of his essential activity, yet in the "new birth" he is the passive recipient of a new life, just as in creation or as in the resurrection of the dead from the tomb.

As this life is communicated directly from Christ to the redeemed, the Holy Ghost becomes the bond which unites the two. This, too, not by a single terminating act, but by a continuous abiding within them as the Spirit of life, ever stimulating and developing this life to the end. Observe, further, that the first manifestation of this new life is the act of faith which embraces the Lord Jesus as a complete Saviour. This then becomes a reciprocal bond going forth from the

believer, which consummates the union with his blessed Head. The Redeemer and the redeemed are thus lashed together into one party by these double bonds; and as both are due to the indwelling of the Divine Spirit, he remains the living bond of union between Christ and his people.

The doctrine of sanctification is closely connected with that of regeneration. Just as in mathematics a moving point generates the line, so the principle of spiritual life implanted in the "new birth" moves forward from that point, and in its grand progression marks out the blessed line of a holy living, through which we grow in meetness for the presence and glory of our Father above. The power of sin is first broken when we are born into the kingdom of God. Holiness is then planted in the germ, which will, in the fulness of its growth, finally expel sin and destroy it in its *being* no less than in its *dominion* and *power*. The Holy Ghost is the agent in both, abiding in the believer for the purpose of completing the work which he has begun. In all this he blends his agency with that of the Son, whose vicar he is, to apply the redemption which was accomplished on the cross. It has just been shown that in regeneration the Spirit derives the life directly from the Son. The same is true in the expansion of this life, in the sanctification of the Christian. It is incredible that the Redeemer shall be at such pains to achieve the perfect righteousness through which the sinner is justified, without intending to deliver him at length from all sin—partially and gradually in this life of discipline, but completely in the life of reward hereafter. If we cannot imitate him in that ex-

haustive obedience which he rendered as mediator, we may honor him in that lower obedience which he has set before us as our exemplar.

In the whole process of sanctification the Spirit places before him the Lord Jesus in his human nature as the model of that holiness which is to be wrought in the believer. As an artist seeks to reproduce the features of the living face upon the canvas, with repeated and delicate touches of the pencil transferring the likeness of the original to the copy, so this divine artist aims to stamp the image of Christ upon the character and life of the Christian. What are termed in Scripture "the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. v. 22), are but the living virtues shining in the character of our blessed Lord. When, therefore, the Holy Ghost by his gracious power reproduces these as traits of Christian experience, it is only the image of Christ seen in the believer. With exact fidelity to truth, the Bible represents the work of sanctification under this idea. In Romans viii. 29, we read, "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." In Galatians iv. 19, Paul writes, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." In First Corinthians xv. 49, "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." In Second Corinthians iii. 18, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Finally, in Colossians iii. 10, God's children are represented as having "put off the old man with his deeds," and as having "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created them." In this passage the work of sanctification is presented on its negative and on its positive side alike—in the mortification of sin, on the one hand, and growth in holiness, on the other. On what a sure foundation does the hope of the Christian rest! Surely he can exclaim, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me," for here is the Spirit within him to fulfil the promise, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 6.)

Nor is this all; he who is the Spirit of life in the regeneration and sanctification on earth, will appear as the Spirit of glory in heaven. In the blissful hour of the believer's translation above, the Holy Ghost will still be the bond of union with the glorified Head; and will therefore secure, after this life of discipline, "the glory that shall follow." The last stain of sin being washed away, and its baleful presence removed from the soul, it will be borne along the same ascending path on which the Lord himself went up into "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." Even the body which has been redeemed will share in this mighty transfiguration, when it "shall be changed and fashioned like unto his (Christ's) glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. iii. 21.) The power by which this astonishing transformation will be effected is thus set forth in Rom. viii. 11:

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." This is "the inheritance reserved for the saints in light." Through an indissoluble union with their Lord, of which the Holy Ghost is the eternal bond, they will share in the glory which is the Mediator's reward.

These statements, full perhaps to repletion, are made because on this spiritual life conveyed from Christ to his people all fellowship with God in prayer depends. This is the highest dignity to which the creature can be advanced. It was the destiny first assigned, when man was formed in the image of God; and it is the privilege which is restored to the believer through the riches of divine grace. The Apostle John says (First Epis. i. 3): "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." And the method of this fellowship is declared in these words: "Through him (Christ) we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. ii. 18.) Through the redemption by Christ giving us the right of approach, and by the Spirit giving us the power of approach, we gain access to the Father. Yet God is afar off, how shall we on earth hold this fellowship? The medium is alone through prayer, addressed to him on the mercy-seat. God, too, is infinitely holy; and it is only as the life of holiness is imparted to us that this intercourse can be maintained. This holiness is implanted by the Holy Ghost in the "new birth," and is developed in our sanctification, fulfilling all the conditions on which this divine fellowship may be enjoyed.

How immense the privilege thus secured of communion with all the persons of the Godhead—we drawing near in prayer, and they corresponding with us through the indwelling Spirit! No longer dead in sins, but alive through the Holy Ghost, we "come boldly to the throne of grace." In the spirit of adoption, we cry "Abba, Father," with all the confidence of sons. As the believer advances in the divine life, his trust deepens, his love becomes more constant, his will more submissive, his joy more exhilarating: and as his hope brightens from day to day, his prayers swell into thanksgiving; until at length they burst into hallelujahs of praise, leading the worship even of angels before the throne of glory on high.

CHAPTER IX.

PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT.—Continued.

THE third aspect of the Spirit's work is that in which it *blends with the priestly intercession of our Lord, carrying it out in the experience of the believer.* The official title under which the Holy Spirit is promised, and which denotes his subsidiary agency, is that of Comforter. The word is apt to be understood in too narrow a sense, covering but a part of the Spirit's office in simply consoling those who are in sorrow or in trouble. The word Paraclete is the exact transfer of the original Greek into our English tongue. Our Lord speaks of him as "another Comforter," differing from himself, yet evidently discharging a similar or analogous function. The only passage in which the same title is assigned to himself, is found in the First Epistle of John, ii. 1: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." That the word should here be translated "Advocate," is very helpful in its interpretation when applied to the Holy Ghost as the "Comforter." He, too, is an advocate, as well as the Son. And since these are the only places in the New Testament in which this term indicates the office of both, we are thrown back upon the etymology for its true signification. It means simply one called in from without, to stand by us with his counsel and aid. For example,

we are embarrassed in our worldly business and are involved in legal complications; we call in a counsellor learned in the law, who pleads our cause before the tribunals of justice; that advocate is, in the discharge of his office, our paraclete or comforter. Again, we are laid upon a bed of serious illness and draw apparently near to death; we call in a skilful physician, who probes the disease and restores us to health; that physician is, in his function, another comforter. So Christ is the one Paraclete, Advocate, or Comforter—translate the word as we may—and the Holy Ghost is the other; each in the discharge of their respective functions. The word Comforter is as good an equivalent as any in our language, and it is hallowed by long and precious association. But the meaning must be extended beyond the signification of mere consoler, if it is to express the whole office of the blessed Spirit.

It is not difficult to see how the Spirit's advocacy blends with that of the Son, in accomplishing the salvation of men. When, like the high priest of old, Christ with his own blood entered within the veil, it was "to appear in the presence of God for us." In the discharge of the second part of the priestly office, he claims those who were his own, according to the terms of the covenant, by the double right of the Father's gift and his own purchase. The plea prevails: and the answer is filed in the records of the court, giving over to him the blessings of salvation, to be dispensed to his people in all generations, as they shall be born into the world. Here, then, is the advocacy of the Son. The priestly office now yields to the kingly in the administration of this purchased grace. Ascend-

ing his throne, the Mediator calls for the Divine Spirit, the executive agent in this scheme of mercy, and commissions him to take this grace, sued out in the chancery above, and to work it into the actual experience of the redeemed. When, therefore, the Holy Ghost awakens the sinner's conscience, convinces him of his ruin under the law, then reveals Christ Jesus to him as the only Saviour, whom he "persuades and enables" to receive with a living faith; in all this we trace the advocacy of the Spirit joining itself to the advocacy of the Son, in carrying out the purpose of redeeming love.

This, however, is but the beginning of the Spirit's advocacy. As the Christian advances in the divine life, he is put under a gracious discipline that his character may be compacted, and his virtues strengthened, until he shall come "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." In all the straits through which he may be called to pass, he pours out his soul, like his Master, "with strong crying and tears unto him that is able to save," and is "heard in that he fears." It is "the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man," and it prevails. But what renders prayer "effectual"? Not its length, nor its vehemence, nor its eloquence, nor its passion; but simply the living sympathy which is established between the soul pleading in the closet, and the Saviour interceding in the heavens. This is secured through the intervention of the Divine Spirit. He takes the desires which are in the heart of Jesus Christ, and works them into our hearts so that they become our desires. He takes the plea which is upon the lips of the great Advocate above,

and seals it upon our lips as our prayer in Christ's blessed name. It is this sweet but secret correspondence between our Head and ourselves that makes true prayer at all. Aside from this, all is mere posture and the mutter of incantations. When the Holy Spirit thus pleads in the lower court of the believer's soul, what is it but the echo of the pleading in the higher court above? The voice on earth mingles with the voice in heaven, in the joint pleading for the gift of eternal life. How else shall we interpret the classical passage in Rom. viii. 26: "Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Have we then two intercessors? Yes, verily; but not divergent and clashing. They are the two comforters—the one and the other—both converging their distinct offices to one result. The one intercedes *for* us, the other intercedes *within* us. The one sues out our claim before the law; the other works this claim into us, as the prayer that draws down the gift. The terms in the original are exceedingly forcible, by that duplication of words which the driving logic of this apostle compels him to employ. The combination also is such as to interpret for us the nature of these "intercessions" of the Spirit, distinguishing them from those of the Son. For example: "The Spirit '*helpeth*' our infirmities;" the word "helpeth" is but a feeble rendering of the original—though as good as the idiom of our language will allow. The image presented in the Greek, is that of the Spirit laying hold with us of our weaknesses, over on the other side opposite to us.

Just as if a heavy beam must be lifted by two men—the one taking hold at one end, placing it on his shoulder; while the other, opposite to him, takes hold of the other end and bears the weight with him. Then, as to the word "intercession": the Spirit strikes or falls in with us, and on our behalf; and this suggestion of his interposed aid is repeated by the duplication of the preposition which denotes that he is acting on our behalf. The entire structure of the passage in the original shows that the "intercession" of the Spirit is not *aside* from us, as that of our High Priest; but that it is *within* us, mingling his energies with our own, and thus bearing with us the burdens too heavy to be borne alone. His work is entirely subjective, bringing the intercession of our Lord above into the desires and petitions of the Christian below; whereby they become the intercessions of the Spirit, who thus blends his advocacy with that of Christ himself.

Even this interpretation does not exhaust the emphasis of Paul's testimony concerning the agency of the Spirit in prayer. He adds, in verse 27, these remarkable words: "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Two things are to be noted here: That when the Omniscient searches the heart of the praying saint, he recognizes in the outpouring of his desires the intercession of the Spirit. Then, further, that this intervention of the Spirit makes the prayer effectual, because he cannot ask for anything not agreeable to the will of God. He that "searcheth the hearts" finds in the bosom of our desires "the mind of the Spirit,"

which indites nothing unaccordant with the divine will. Here, then, is the nexus between our prayer and God's secret and holy and ordaining purpose. Truly "we know not what we should pray for as we ought," because we know not all that infinite love has laid up in store for us; but the Holy Ghost, who is the equal of the Father and the Son in all the counsels of the Godhead, knows all that is hid within the divine will; and he can put into our hearts the desire for just those things which sovereign and ordaining love designs to bestow. Thus all the difficulties which an earthly and mechanical science puts in the way of prayer are swept aside by the breath of this almighty and free Spirit of God.

The Holy Ghost becomes our Advocate or Comforter in another direction, as *the Spirit of adoption, bearing witness to our sonship in Christ.* An advocate at a human tribunal is not relieved of his trust until he instates his client in all that has been secured to him by the judgment of the court. And his last official act is to certify the title under which all the rights and immunities obtained in the suit can be held. Thus Christ, having in his plea obtained judgment for us as to all the privileges of the covenant, conveys the same to the renewed soul through the Spirit, who, as the Advocate in immediate charge of this trust, assures the believer of his title to all that was in litigation, and is now secured under a judicial decree. This is what is meant by "the witness of the Spirit" to the fact of our adoption as sons of God. In John i. 12 it is recorded, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them

that believe on his name." How shall certainty be enjoyed as to this experience? The answer is found in the words of Paul, in Romans viii. 15, 16, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." With equal force of expression the same apostle testifies in Galatians iv. 4, 5, 6: "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons: and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Let it be observed in these passages that the Spirit of adoption in the first is styled the Spirit of God's Son in the second, plainly subordinating the office of the former to the latter, according to the uniform representation of the Scriptures. But in what does this witness of the Spirit consist, and in what manner is it expressed? The more common reply is, that this testimony is to be found in those graces which are the fruit of the Spirit's work within the soul of the believer, such as love, joy, peace, goodness, faith, and the like. But the difficulty then will be to discriminate between the witness of our own spirit and that of the Holy Ghost, for the declaration of the apostle is explicit, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The question then arises, If this witness of the Spirit is found to consist in what we inwardly experience, how are we

to distinguish his testimony from the witness which our own spirit bears to the same fact? Possibly this might be suggested as the solution. These fruits of the Spirit are certified to us by the testimony of consciousness as being *our* experiences. The peace is *our* peace, the joy is *our* joy, the long-suffering is *our* long-suffering. We have the testimony of our own spirit, which is nothing else than the deliverance which consciousness makes that these are acts which proceed from us, under the operation of those laws which govern and control them. We know them to be ours, and hence they constitute, under the testimony of consciousness, the witness of our spirit.

But not one of these graces would exist, unless the Holy Spirit had first planted the germ within us; nor would those germs be developed into growth and fruit-bearing, if the Holy Ghost did not preside over that new life which he has imparted. It is through his indwelling power they are brought up from their obscurity, where they are hid away as secret principles in the depths of the soul. The two are thus blended together, whilst yet they are distinct: we have the witness of the Spirit of God in our own spirit. When we are reading, in our own experience, the witness of our spirit, we are at the same time reading the witness of the Holy Ghost. Just as sometimes happens with an ancient manuscript: there is a plain reading upon the surface of the parchment; and then there is another reading beneath that which is patent to the eye, of some more ancient writer who has penned his thoughts in cipher that is concealed beneath. So does the Holy Ghost with his finger write upon the heart

these evidences of our acceptance with God; and then consciousness bearing testimony that these are our experiences, we have the witness of the Holy Spirit mingled and blended with the witness of our spirit.

The writer of these pages, however, cannot resist the conviction that something beyond this is intended; and that this narrow interpretation springs from a wholesome recoil from the fanaticism which lays claim to private supernatural revelations, which can be subjected to no scrutiny whatever. According to the exposition just given, the conclusion is reached only through a syllogism. The believer says to himself—the Scriptures set forth certain graces of the Spirit as evidence of sonship in Christ; I know that these graces are features of my own experience; I am certified therefore of my "acceptance in the beloved." The argument may be perfectly sound; but it is the conclusion of the logical understanding alone; a demonstration to the intellect, and not to the heart. If the testimonies of the two witnesses are to be distinguished, why may it not be represented thus? The witness of our spirit is simply the consciousness that we possess these traits of character, which are the evidence of a gracious state. The witness of the Holy Spirit goes beyond this in a present assurance of our adoption into the family of God, through a secret influence which he brings to bear directly upon the believer's heart. Dr. Meyer, for example, has this comment upon the passage in the eighth chapter of Romans: "Paul distinguishes from the subjective self-consciousness, *I* am the child of God, the therewith accordant

testimony of the objective Holy Spirit, *thou* art the child of God: the latter is the *yea* to the former, and thus we cry Abba in the spirit." In like manner, Dr. Godet says: "The apostle means that we are the sons of God, not only because our heart cherishes a filial disposition towards God, and inspires us with the cry of love, *my Father;* but—and this is still more sublime—because from the heart of God himself there comes down the answer by the voice of the Holy Spirit, *my child.* It is not only our arms which are stretched out to take hold of God who gives himself to us in Christ, but his at the same time which embrace us and draw us to his bosom." Two other statements as to what this witness of the Spirit really is, may be allowed: "The testimony of the Spirit is immediate, by his secret influence upon the heart, quieting and calming all distrust and diffidence concerning its condition, by his own immediate power. Fear is banished by a soft whisper from the Spirit of God in the heart; and this in such a way that, though the spirit of man is calmed by it, yet it cannot tell how it comes to pass." Again, another writer says: "The witness of the Spirit is a thing we cannot express; a certain inexpressible assurance that we are the children of God; a certain secret manifestation that God hath received us and put away our sins. No one knows it but they that have it."*

The exception cannot justly be taken against the views here stated, that they ascribe a mysteriousness to the Spirit which is open to fanatical abuse. All the

*The two last quotations may be found in *Thirty Thousand Thoughts*, Vol. I., page 313; Funk & Wagnalls's Edition.

operations of the Holy Ghost are secret and mysterious, and the same objection may be urged against his work everywhere. Our Lord himself declares, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." If this doctrine be abused by any, it is at their own peril; and the check against fanaticism is found in the testimony of the Holy Scriptures as to the evidences of a converted state, by which all secret experiences are to be tested. We cannot afford to surrender one shred of truth because of the ambition or pride of those who seek to be wise above what is written.

Upon this witness of the Holy Spirit depends the assured hope of eternal life, after which every Christian should strive, and about which so much confusion of thought obtains, to the great discomfort of many who are truly the children of God. Nothing is more common than to hear the wail breaking from a troubled heart, "Oh, that I could be assured beyond a doubt that I am a child of God!" And yet this assurance has been enjoyed a thousand times by the soul that utters this cry. There is not a moment of spiritual communion with God when this assurance is not ours. In those moments when we weep over our sins, and under a sense of pardon hold fellowship with our Father and his Son Jesus Christ, we can no more doubt our acceptance with God than we can doubt our natural existence. The misconception is here: What these mourning disciples mean is an assurance which shall be the permanent and fixed habit

of the soul. The witness of the Spirit, on the contrary, is often intermittent, though progressive. In the precious moments above referred to this witness brings to us the desired assurance. But our misfortune and guilt is, that we are not always in the exercise of faith; and these experiences, so full of comfort and joy, become occasional and not constant. It indicates a large advance in the divine life when faith becomes a steady principle, always pointing to God and the Redeemer, and love goes forth in constant exercise. Only then does this assurance, which was occasional before, become the permanent condition of the soul. It is not wise, however, for lack of this high attainment, to disparage those joys which, though inconstant, are still secured to us only through this witness of the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit to the reality of our Christian hope.

The office of the Holy Spirit as strictly the Comforter of those who are "holden in the cords of affliction" must not be overlooked. It requires, perhaps, a large experience in sorrow to appreciate the tenderness with which our heavenly Father draws near to his suffering children. Often it is when called, like Moses, to go up into "the thick darkness where God is," we are permitted to speak with him face to face, as never before in the common daylight of earthly intercourse. Yet we cannot open the Bible at any page on which the divine promises do not sparkle like the drops of morning dew on the mown grass. Isaiah, in announcing the Messiah to come, describes him as sent "to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them

that are bound; to comfort all that mourn; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." (Chapter lxi. 1–3.) And so this Messiah, when he "opened his mouth" in the inaugural discourse of his ministry, uttered his second benediction upon the soul that mourns: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." (Matt. v. 4.) With most exquisite pathos, he comforts his ancient people thus: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you: and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." (Isa. lxvi. 13.) One other comprehensive statement, from the New Testament, will suffice as doctrinal testimony: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." (2 Cor. i. 3, 4.) This gracious function is assigned to the Holy Spirit, who goes with the children of God through the dark valleys between the high mountains, which the rays of the sun rarely penetrate, cheering the weary heart with the promise of that day when, in the upper kingdom, "God shall wipe away all tears; . . . and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. xxi. 4.)

The topics of this chapter suggest their own application to the doctrine of prayer. In each of the three aspects of his work here considered, the Holy Ghost is eminently the Spirit of prayer. If his office be sub-

sidiary to that of Christ in transferring the intercessions of the Advocate above into the petitions of the saints below, he becomes to them "the Spirit of grace and of supplications," as described in Zechariah xii. 10. For it is by no mechanical conveyance the pleadings of the Mediator before the throne of the Father are imported into the affections and longings of the soul that prays on earth. The laws of man's free spirit cannot be disregarded. There must be an effective teaching of one who was before ignorant of his spiritual needs, a clear illumination of the mind that was darkened by sin, a strange rousing of a torpid conscience; in short, a thorough dealing with the perverted and debased powers of the human spirit, before the first accent of true prayer can be lisped. To the Christian who is drawn by this second Advocate into closer fellowship with the first, what power will be imparted from this growing sympathy with both, in his daily approach to the mercy-seat!

Turning to the next office of the Spirit in bearing witness to our adoption as sons, what confidence is inspired by that freedom wherewith Christ has made us free! No vain beating of the air now with doubting and doubtful requests; but "asking in faith, nothing wavering." For "this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." (1 John v. 14.) And have we not an "unction from the Holy One" that "teacheth us of all things"; who, because "he is truth and is no lie," "maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

If, too, this Comforter fill the believer with the

peace which the storms of earth cannot disturb, prayer will change its mournful accents into notes of praise: and by a spiritual alchemy the very sorrows of this life will be transmuted into joys, and its conflicts into the triumph of a perpetual victory.

CHAPTER X.

PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT.—Continued.

THE Scriptures further represent the Holy Spirit as a *seal* and as an *earnest*. The consideration of these will conclude what is proposed, in this connection, to be said upon the office-work of the Holy Ghost.

I. *The Holy Spirit a seal.* In 2 Cor. i. 21, 22, Paul writes: "He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Again, in Eph. i. 13: "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Also, in Eph. iv. 30: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." These passages are mutually explanatory, and together they bring out the truth, that it is God the Father who seals; that this sealing is in Christ Jesus; and the seal is the Holy Ghost himself, the special promise of the New Testament dispensation. The point of inquiry now is, in what respect is the Holy Spirit, in his personal indwelling in the believer, the seal which God has put upon his people?

A seal is used for three purposes. It is employed to authenticate important public instruments, so as to put them beyond cavil or dispute. As, for example, a minister going to a foreign court has the seal of the state impressed upon his credentials, by which he is

authenticated to those to whom he goes. Thus his official acts, under the operation of this seal, become the acts of the government which he represents. Treaties formed between states become binding upon the contracting parties, by virtue of the respective seals which they attach to the instrument of union. Perhaps the word is to be understood in this sense in John vi. 27, which testifies of "the Son of man," "him hath God the Father sealed"; that is, it denotes that Christ was specially sent to be the redeemer of men, and was duly authenticated as such by the miracles which he wrought as the sign or proof of his commission from the Father. Again, a seal is used to mark possession; as when a name, or sign-manual of any sort, is placed upon an article as the evidence of ownership. Out of this use of the seal sprung the ancient science of heraldry, when one's rank in the nobility of the land is asserted by his coat of arms and crest, through which is published, not only the station held, but the legal title on which it is claimed. Finally, a seal is employed for securing what is valued: for example, should a package of jewels be entrusted to one's care, a single glance at the unbroken seal suffices to show that the trust has not been tampered with.

(1.) *The Holy Spirit is the seal which marks the people of God as his possession.* It is written, "the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. xxxii. 9), spoken of ancient Israel as separated from all the nations of the earth—not, however, exclusive of his church in every age, of which they were the early representative and type. The

heart is filled with adoring wonder at such a stoop of condescension: that the Creator of all things, who "hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and meted out heaven with the span"—that he should choose any of the children of men for his "portion," and satisfy his love with them as his "inheritance." They were his already by right of creation and providence; now they are claimed to be his through the operation of grace. Shall not such a claim be marked by an adequate seal; and what seal so expressive of the divine majesty as the Divine Spirit himself?

But those now the children of God's love were once the children of his wrath, bound under condemnation of his law, spiritually dead before him. Evidently they must be made alive before they can become his "portion." Not only must they be redeemed from the curse, they must also be renewed and sanctified. It is not enough that they shall be his putatively in the eye of the law; they must be actually his by transformation of character, such as shall make them "partakers of his holiness." This then is the first part of the Spirit's sealing, to *make* the sinner a child of God through a spiritual birth. Herein is adoption with God distinguished from adoption among men. By the latter we may treat a child as though he were our own; but we cannot infuse one drop of our blood into his veins, nor transfer one feature of our face, or of our character, to him as an inheritance. But we become the children of God by no such legal fiction as this; we are such by a true, though spiritual, birth. In John i. 13, those to whom "power is given to become the sons of God" are declared to be "born, not of

blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

The Holy Ghost having thus brought us into the Father's possession by renewing grace, remains within us, the signature of his hand that we are his, and his alone. No one can read our Lord's testimony in his parting address to his disciples without noting this "abiding with us" as the peculiar feature of the Spirit's office. Of himself Christ says: "It is expedient for you that I go away;" but "the Father, . . . shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." (John xiv. 16.) It is through this personal indwelling he becomes the seal of the Father's possession. He is designated to that function. A divine signature is put on the believer, by which the Father claims him as his own; and by which he in turn can claim the Father as his. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." (1 John iv. 13.) What a blessed interchange of recognition is this! The Father says, with his own accent of love: "My child, I know you are sealed unto me, by the Spirit that dwelleth in you." To which the believer responds, with a gracious assurance: "My Father, I know you by the same signature of the Spirit's presence within me." So being sealed in Christ, by the Father, with the Holy Ghost, our fellowship is with the sacred three in the secret, but sweet, communion of the Godhead.

Is the Divine Spirit himself this seal of God's possession of us for ever? How unspeakable the comfort it brings to the soul that appropriates the truth! When we bend under the burdens of life, here is the seal of

divine help in the hour of human weakness. When the hand that bereaves draws the curtain over the window lest the garish splendor of the sun should mock our grief, here is the seal of divine consolation—laying us down in our Father's bosom to receive the kisses of his love. When we go through "the valley of the shadow of death," and nature shudders at the touch of the cold waters, here is the seal of the promise that, even in the river, our feet shall rest upon the stones of the covenant. Yea, and beyond death itself, when the flesh shall slumber in the dust, here is the seal of a glorious resurrection, chasing away the gloom of the grave. And in the world to come there is still the seal of the indwelling Spirit, that we may share with our King "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Truly "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." (2 Tim. ii. 19.)

It may not be logically distinct to say it, yet for the sake of emphasis it will be well to add:

2. *The Holy Spirit a seal authenticating God's people to the world outside.* It is superfluous to show that Christians are called out from the world, and charged to be separate from it. They are for this purpose organized into a visible body, with constitution, laws, ordinances, and officers differing from the civil government. The very name by which this corporate society is designated in the original language of the Bible, Ecclesia, signifies something called out from that with which it is no longer to be identified. And the office assigned to the church is, to win over a foreign and hostile world to "the obedience of faith" in the king-

dom of her Lord and Head. Thus, in his priestly intercession, Christ declares that his disciples "are not of the world, even as he is not of the world." (John xvii. 16.) He further testifies to his followers, in John xv. 19: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Our Lord declared to Pilate (John xviii. 36): "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." Hence the command of Jehovah to his people, in 2 Corinthians vi. 17: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord"; to which is added the apostolic counsel (Rom. xii. 2): "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

These passages do not teach an ascetic seclusion which will take the Christian out of his earthly relations. This, indeed, would defeat the very purpose for which he is placed in them. Like his divine Master, he is in the world and in the vortex of all its cares, that he may purify it by his presence and example. He is *in* the world, but not *of* it; confessing that he is but a pilgrim seeking "a better country," where his true citizenship lies. Nevertheless, the antagonism is such that the two must be clearly distinguished. For this reason, those who are sealed as children of God must be known as such by the world from which they are separated. The Spirit's seal, therefore, accomplishes a double result, in authenticating the divine claim,

and in testifying this to the world at large. By the fruits of the Spirit, exhibited in their character and conversation, they plainly show that they "have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God." (1 Cor. ii. 12.) This forms a part of that providential agency by which God warns the wicked of their evil way, and justifies the censure to be pronounced against them at the last day.

(3). *The Holy Ghost is the seal whereby God secures the righteous to himself.* They are exposed to many dangers in their progress through life. The world is unfriendly, and its influence tends to chill the fervor of piety towards God. Snares beset their path, in which the unwary are easily entangled. Their own hearts are treacherous and deceitful, under the power of indwelling sin. To crown the whole, the devil seeks to harass those whom he cannot destroy, assailing the believer with evil suggestions, or stirring up the wicked to tempt or to reproach them. How shall these timid and trembling followers of the Lamb be preserved in the midst of these perils? The seal by which they are known is the seal by which they also "are kept unto the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." The Holy Spirit dwells within them as the mighty power by which this is achieved, and for this purpose he abides with us to carry on the work of grace to the end. He it is that protects us in the hour of temptation, that strengthens us in the hour of weakness, that encourages us in the moments of despondency, that recovers us from our sad and disgraceful falls. Why should he not be the Spirit of power, when the Father and the Son are both repre-

sented and united in him? And may it not be for this that the only sin which can never be forgiven is the sin against this person of the Godhead? He that blasphemes the Holy Ghost sins definitely against both the Father and the Son, from whom he proceeds, and by whom he is jointly commissioned. This awful sanction may also guard the office of the Spirit, since to him is assigned the scheme of redemption in its final stage, where it is applied to the souls of men; so that he who outrages the Holy Ghost may be said, not only to have sinned past the Godhead, but also past the salvation provided and offered in the gospel. Surely, in such a case, "there remains no more sacrifice for sin," seeing that the blood of the covenant has been trampled under foot, and he who should have sprinkled that blood upon the troubled conscience has been reproachfully driven from his sacred and necessary office.

(4). *The Holy Spirit seals the believer, that he may illustrate the riches of divine grace.* This topic, too large to be indirectly discussed, can only be presented under one or two examples: While the sinner knowing only the law seeks salvation through a slavish obedience of the letter, the Christian offers an obedience which springs not from fear, but from love. The former strives for a righteousness of his own, through which he may be justified before God. The latter, already justified by a righteousness reckoned to him, and appropriated by faith, has only to show his gratitude by an obedience that is free and unselfish. The one brings his work to God as to a paymaster, that he may receive his wages. The other brings his loving

service as a son to his father, without counting how much it may be worth. The obedience of the one is mercenary, technical, legal; that of the other is evangelical in its temper, an offering of gratitude and joy.

Observe, further, the difference in the rewards of the two. The legalist who clings to the measurement of his own obedience is clouded with doubt whether the demands of the law are fully met. He walks in hesitation and fear all his days; and dreads the time of reckoning, when he may be consigned to hopeless bankruptcy forever. On the other hand, the justified believer, already assured of his acceptance in Christ, enjoys many a love-token from his Father's hand—the sure foretaste of the final benediction "well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." How shall this be, except through the Spirit, who is himself the seal attesting it all to his faith?

Is it not, too, a splendid mission, in a world where men are so much under the domination of the senses, to stand forth as witnesses for the spiritual and the divine? Under the stern necessity of caring for the body, the material and the tangible rush in through five separate avenues and oppress the soul. To the majority of our race nothing appears solid but the "everlasting mountains" and the "earth that abideth forever." The short life of three-score years and ten, because it is so close to us, shuts out eternity which shows no trace of succession or of change. How solemn a trust to stand beneath heaven's high arch, and point upward through the veil of cloud to the throne of Jehovah, and witness for the soul that is

forever to bow and worship at his feet! Yet who can recover from the delusions imposed by this world of matter, that is not enlightened by the Divine Spirit? And if called to this high office of testifying for the God whom men forget, and for the soul which men neglect, shall we not need to be sealed by him who has flooded us with the light and the joy of the divine and the true? To this end, he is sent to "abide with us"—that in the assurance of his presence who is pure Spirit, we may affirm the spiritual that abides, over the material that perishes in the using.

Let revelation then lift the veil, that we may see the saints in glory, witnesses for grace and redemption still, giving the key-note of eternal praise to him who has redeemed them with his blood; while the "many angels round about the throne," and "every creature which is in heaven and on earth," swell the chorus of the immortal song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." What a destiny, to be the witness-bearers to all that is gracious and spiritual and Godlike, on earth and in heaven, through time and through eternity! "This honor have all the saints."

II. *The Holy Spirit an earnest.* An earnest is not simply a pledge of any sort given in security for the fulfilment of a promise, but it is a pledge peculiar in its form. It has been accurately defined to be "a pledge in kind, a part paid or given in warrant that more of the same kind is forthcoming": or, as otherwise, yet similarly expressed, "the beginning of the payment which should take place in full afterward."

It is specially for this that "the earnest of the Spirit" affords to the child of God so many "songs in the house of his pilgrimage." Let us read the testimonies: In 2 Cor. i. 22, it is written: "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." In chap. v. 5, we read: "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." And in Eph. i. 13, 14, the fuller statement is made: "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." Evidently in the sealing is contained also the earnest: the former establishing God's claim to us, the latter establishing our claim upon him. We have only to inquire in what way the indwelling of the Holy Ghost is to us the earnest of our inheritance. Four particulars need only to be briefly insisted upon:

(1.) *In the Spirit God conveys himself into us as our portion.* The one God is Father, Son and Holy Ghost: they may be distinguished, but never separated. Where the Father is, there is the Son likewise: and where the Son is, there is also the Spirit. This is clearly settled by the testimony of our Lord himself: "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me;" "he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." (John xiv. 9, 11.) As the Father is revealed in the Son, so are they both united in the Spirit, who, bringing the work of grace to its conclusion in those whom he seals, brings also the official work of both these, and conveys it all into the life-experience of the believer. Thus

does the true Christian become: "A habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 22.) The Father dwells within us, by his adoption of us as sons; the Son dwells in us, in whom we are sealed as our redeemer; the Holy Ghost dwells in us by his sanctifying power, sealing us as "a holy people to the Lord." Does it seem extravagant to speak of these as coming, in their official distinction, and abiding with us? Hear it from the lips of the great Revealer himself: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.) How is this abode effected, except through the Spirit, whose function it is to "abide with us forever"? If in this indwelling of the Spirit we recognize the Father and the Son as taking possession of us, surely that Spirit is the earnest of our "inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

(2.) *The Holy Ghost is an earnest of our future possession, since through the fruit of his work in us we learn what heaven is.* The joys of that bright world are described to us in imagery the most gorgeous that can fascinate the mind. Yet along with this is the disclosure of its spiritual employments; so that we easily interpret the outward symbols which address the imagination through the senses, and are preserved from gross and carnal conceptions of its blessedness. It can never become to us a sensual paradise, when its inhabitants are purged of all sensual desires, and are engaged in a constant worship of Jehovah. We need only to recite the catalogue of Christian graces, which are declared to be the fruit of the Spirit to know that

his office is purely spiritual. Just in so far as he rules in our hearts, we put off "the mind of the flesh," and are brought into sympathy with all that is holy and pure. We learn the nature of heavenly blessedness by our own choice on earth of its spiritual joys. Thus the Holy Ghost dwelling within us, and producing these holy affections, becomes the earnest of the "purchased possession." In these "first-fruits of the Spirit" we have the first-fruits of our eternal portion in our Father's upper kingdom. The pledge is given *in kind*, part payment of the whole when we come into his presence above; and this, by the definition, is what constitutes an earnest.

(3.) *The Holy Spirit, by making us heirs in Christ, is the earnest of the inheritance itself.* A wide range of doctrine is marked off in these words, of which we can only skirt the edge here. The only Begotten of the Father, by virtue of his exclusive sonship, is the exclusive heir of all things. It is therefore only with his consent, assuming them into union with himself, that any creature can become either son, or heir, with him. Two statements in Scripture cover this truth exactly: In John i. 12, power is given to become the sons of God only to those that receive Christ, the incarnate Son, and "believe on his name." Then as to such it is declared in Rom. viii. 17, that the Spirit bears witness to believers that they are "the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." It is scarcely necessary to go over ground already trodden. It is of the Spirit the sinner is born again into the family of God. It is the Spirit who "persuades and enables" the sinner to receive Christ

and to believe on his name. It is through this faith that the sinner is personally united with Christ, and through this union to become in him a son of God. But if in Christ a son, then in Christ also an heir: and if in Christ an heir, then with Christ a joint heir. The whole process comes before us in the form of a demonstration. There remains only the conclusion: that the Spirit who has wrought the sonship and the heirship, as the Spirit of adoption, must bear witness to both, as he seals the believer; and in the act of sealing he becomes the earnest of the inheritance for which he has provided the heir.

(4.) *The Holy Spirit an earnest of our translation to glory.* Among his titles is this, "the Spirit of glory." (1 Pet. iv. 14.) And in 2 Corinthians iii. 18, is recorded a special testimony in this connection: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The law of assimilation is here explicitly recognized, by which we grow like the objects we steadfastly and lovingly contemplate. This process of assimilation has been going on through our entire Christian course. In the Scriptures, as in a mirror, we behold the glory of Christ, the Lord; and by beholding him we have been changed more and more into his image from glory to glory: and the blessed transformation is distinctly ascribed to the Spirit of the Lord. Collate with this another and similar passage, in 1 John iii. 2: "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as

he is." In the future world we shall be like him all the more, since we shall then see him no more "through a glass darkly," but face to face behold him as he is. If, then, our blessedness in heaven will consist in being like our glorified Head and in sharing his glory, is not the Spirit an earnest of this whilst here changing us into that image from one degree of glory to another? The image here is the earnest of the image there; shall not the growing glory here be an earnest of the perfected glory there?

If this interpretation of the seal and the earnest be correct, their connection with the prayers of God's people will be both intimate and precious. Their attainments in grace may still be imperfect, and the confession of their shortcomings in duty may be constant. Yet the very struggle against sin, and the passionate desire to be more conformed to the Saviour's image, sufficiently attest the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. His work upon their hearts is not quite finished, will not be until the close of life; but at every stage of it, the seal of God's possession is upon them and is the ground of their hope and their joy. With what force will this assurance react upon them! How much more dreadful does sin appear, as committed against so much love! How much deeper the penitence with which it is bewailed! How increasingly precious is the redemption of their souls; and how much more firmly will their faith clasp the person of him by whom this salvation is procured! As the Divine Spirit brings all this close to their hearts, the rising flood of these emotions will be emptied into the fervent, pleading prayers which bear them up to the

King upon his throne. So it is with the earnest, as it is with the seal. If in these experiences a portion of the future inheritance is enjoyed, how sincere will be the gratitude pouring itself out in the praise into which prayer itself will be converted! It is a mistake to suppose that assurance of salvation relaxes the energy of those who enjoy it. It is rather a spur to higher attainments in holiness; because the appeal is made to the nobler principles of the soul, and this appeal enforced by the constraining power of the indwelling Spirit of God. So long as man possesses a rational and moral nature, so long will grace work out its result through all the faculties of the soul. The believer is not lifted to heaven by wheel, axle and pulley; but is borne upward, like the eagle of the mountain, upon his own wings of faith and prayer; whilst the power of a divine life lies behind the voluntary action which directs the flight—this flight never to be arrested until it reaches the steps of the eternal throne. Such is prayer when it is filled with the joy of the seal, and with the assurance of the earnest.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION.

IN the first part of this essay, the subject of prayer has been treated on the plane of natural religion; the main design being to discuss the objections raised by sceptics against it, as a universal duty. As these for the most part reject the authority of the Scriptures, it was necessary to meet the question on their own ground; and to show that the argument drawn from the constitution of nature itself, and especially from their own mental and moral organization, scatters these objections to the winds.

In the second part, the more grateful task has been to interweave prayer in the whole scheme of grace, by showing its connection with every part of the office discharged by each person of the Godhead. The entire ground of natural and revealed religion has necessarily been covered, so far at least as this particular subject is involved. At each stage of this exposition, the close relation it sustained to the duty and privilege of prayer has been separately traced. Little therefore remains to be said in this general conclusion which has not been already anticipated. A few final observations will, however, be submitted, even at the risk of some repetition.

No act in which we can engage so gathers into itself all the faculties of the human soul, as this of prayer. The understanding which perceives, the reason which

compares, the judgment which concludes, the memory which recalls, the conscience which directs, the heart which loves, the imagination which gives form and life, the taste which feels the beautiful, the will which decides—all the faculties which make up the complement of a rational nature, are drawn into this holy act of prayer to God. Of course, this is not affirmed of routine prayer, which, falling into a round of set phrases, is as purely mechanical as the pagan petitions fastened to the arms of a wind-mill and driven by the breeze. There is no prayer that does not bring into itself the whole content of our spiritual being. If, then, one should aim only at the perfection of his own nature, on this comparatively low ground of its educational value, he cannot afford to disengage himself from the office of prayer.

Again, no act so employs these powers upon the noblest objects, as this of prayer. As soon as we truly kneel, we touch with our thought the throne of the Most High. We mount above the stars beyond creation's limit, and the soul is alone with God. The electric current which thrills through every fibre of the human frame, is but a faint image of that spiritual force which comes forth at this contact with the divine and pervades the human soul. Probably in our profoundest meditation we form no such conception of the majesty of God, as when in prayer we lay our littleness beside his infinite grandeur. Even such an one as Byron, with only the sentiment of the poet, could say:

"There is no god but God! to prayer, lo! God is great."

We touch, in touching him, all things that are awful and high in his eternal dwelling-place; and the soul

feeds on all that fills the mind of Johovah. Nor is this all. In the urgency of our petitions, we unite our will with the will that is supreme, and form a part of all that is done beneath the sun. In the massive language of Milton:

> "That from us aught should ascend to heaven
> So prevalent as to concern the mind
> Of God high-blest, or to incline his will,
> Hard to believe may seem, yet this will
> Prayer."

Surely in an exercise as ennobling as this, prayer is redeemed from the contempt even of the philosopher.

Again, no act so lifts the soul out of the troubles of life, and sustains it under its burdens. Just think of it: we "sink in deep mire where there is no standing," and in the twinkling of a thought we are borne as on angel wings into the pure region where God and the angels are. It may be only a momentary suspension of earthly cares; but it has nerved the spirit to take up again its burden, and endure to the end the discipline of grace. The buoyant spirit that soared for a moment "into the upper day" where no cloud threw its shadow on the heart, understands now the secret of a Father's chastening. The contrast has been felt between the trial and the reward; and now the neck bows meekly to the yoke which was before intolerable. Equally so with the sorrows and bereavements of life, which are seen to have a holy connection with so much that is peculiar and individual in the happiness of heaven hereafter.

In connection with this it is pertinent to notice that prayer bridges all space, and traverses all worlds. It is

the assertion of the spiritual in man, and throws off the chains which bind it down to sense. A single desire will waft the soul into the presence of the immortals. It sweeps in an instant of time through the vast stretches of eternity, and measures the stages of an endless progress in knowledge and bliss. It needs no dialect of earth to interpret its longings. The "groanings which cannot be uttered" are fully understood by him who "knoweth the mind of the Spirit that he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." There is thus no exercise of its powers in which the soul so emancipates itself from all the trammels of its connection with the body, and so nearly approaches to the omnipresence of the Deity, as when engaged in prayer. And in this marvellous obliteration of the limitations of time and space, in its hope taking possession of all that eternity itself can promise, prayer transcends in dignity and value every employment in which man can embark on earth. Yet proud man ventures to deride that which draws him to his knees in reverential homage of his Maker; not perceiving, in all nature, that stooping to the ground but gathers up the muscles for the loftier spring that disdains the earth.

It comes in place now to recognize in prayer a sweet, but unseen, bond that holds society together. We cannot ask of God the forgiveness of our sins, without the explicit pledge that in like manner we will forgive those who trespass against us. Withdraw this pledge in its direct and incidental influence upon human conduct, and let loose the tiger of revenge on society everywhere, and how soon will the restraints

of human law prove ineffectual to control the malice and hate burning in human hearts! Who can estimate the power of that sweet charity for the faults of others, induced by the consciousness of our own defects, which drives us daily in meek confession to the mercy-seat! Think, too, how the intercession for others, which forms a part of prayer, adds link after link in the chain of forbearance; which, like a girdle of love, passes around society and binds its parts together. This is beautifully expressed in the harmonious verse of Tennyson:

> "For what are men better than sheep or goats
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
> Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
> For so the whole round world is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

Finally, prayer covers the ground of all religion, and is the only language in which we may speak to God. Define religion as we may, it includes "man's conscious relation to God," and the duties which flow from the same. Whatever form religion may assume, and whatever the degrees of knowledge it may afford, according to the light enjoyed, man is bound to acknowledge, to serve, and to worship God. If this be withheld, just to that extent is man in rebellion against his own nature, as well as against the Being by whom this nature was fashioned. But every service in religion requires intercourse with the Deity. Is there any way of approach but by the throne of grace? or is there any form of speech except that of humble, fervent, unceasing prayer? Aside from this, man fails

in the highest end of his being, loses the highest honor with which his life can be crowned, runs through a profitless career on earth, only to meet with banishment and long despair in the world to come. Then, reader,

> "Be not afraid to pray—to pray is right.
> Pray, if thou canst, with hope; but ever pray,
> Though hope be weak or sick with long delay;
> Pray in the darkness, if there be no light."

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